1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

/Jamshedpur/

Introduction

Most Santal are still agriculturists, but some have turned to

464 less time-honored work. The chief industry in which these
[84] others are employed is as characteristically modern as the San-
[24] tal themselves are not. It is the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), the largest and oldest modern iron and steel company in India. Since Santal have been employed by TISCO from its founding over fifty years ago, enough time has elapsed for change to become manifest and for the directions of change to become evident.

Jamshedpur, the industrial town which was created to house TISCO, was carved out of the jungle of Singhbhum district, Bihar, in 1908; it owes its location to the rich natural resources of the surrounding area, in which the Santal and other closely related tribes form a substantial part of the population. The
[161] population of the city has been drawn from every section of India as well as a number of foreign countries and has grown to more than 218,000. Jamshedpur is extremely atypical compared to other Indian cities—the fact that it is a company town of unprecedented size accounts in large measure for its atypicality. TISCO has from the beginning completely controlled the government of the town, provided housing for most of its workers, operated a school system, and furnished other services. It is a city as much dominated by modern industry as a medieval city was by its cathedral. Traditional institutions, such as temples and socio-political organizations, exist but are weakly developed; the Tata Company, the Tata Workers Union, and the town's competing regional and national political parties are the dominant corporate groups. Caste persists
[564] as an institution for regulating marriage, for assigning employment in certain traditionally degrading occupations, and to a certain extent in structuring social interaction. But class in the
[175] traditional Western sense is increasingly displacing caste as the

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

/Jamshedpur/

464 organizing principle of membership in social groups and in
[178] social interaction.

It is chiefly the southern Santal from the territories adjacent to Jamshedpur who have contributed to its working force, and these are the Santal with whom I have done field work. They
[167] come largely from the Dhalbhum subdivision of the Singhbhum district in Bihar, the Mayurbhanj district of Orissa, and from the former princely states of Seraikela and Kharswan, now also in Singhbhum; a few have come from the Manbhum district of Bihar, north of Jamshedpur, and from the Midnapur district of Bengal on the east.

Since Santal industrial workers live both outside and within
[121] Jamshedpur, exceptional opportunities were available to compare separately the effects of industrial employment and living in an urban environment. Most of the Santal workers live outside the city of Jamshedpur in village-like settlements (*bustees*) of their own construction. Some of these *bustees* were formerly traditional agricultural villages, while others have grown up only since the development of Jamshedpur and the influx of industrial workers. These settlements from which the workers commute daily to Jamshedpur lie from three to ten miles from the city. The smaller number of Santal workers who live within Jamshedpur either occupy Company houses scattered throughout the town or live in one of the *bustees* within the town.
[114] Though I spent considerable time with the city Santal occupying Company houses, I unfortunately did not have the time to make more than casual observations of the city *bustee* dwellers.
[167] Almost all Santal industrial workers, whether living in Jamshedpur or in a *bustee*, come from native villages within a fifty-mile radius of Jamshedpur.

114 The *bustee* in which I did intensive field work, and which I
167

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

acts which represent and give recognition to existing social units. But apart from these official boundary markers, and perhaps even more important, are the "shared understandings" and the countless similar behavior patterns and similar material manifestations of behavior which characterize a people.

Among the cultural bonds which pertain to all Santal directly (as opposed to those which are exclusively the property of the various component social units of Santal society) is a myth of creation which comes as close to being an official symbol of unity and a constitution as traditional Santal society has attained. However there are numerous versions of this myth due to the wide dispersion of the Santal, and there are very few Santal who are in possession of more than fragments of a complete version. Culshaw reports that the myth is better known among the older generation and suggests that it is dying out; several ceremonies in which it is normally recited appear to be disappearing in the Bankura District of Bengal where Culshaw gathered his data.[2] Since there are also lengthy accounts of the myth in earlier works,[3] one is tempted to accept the conclusion that knowledge of the myth has declined generally. It must, however, be taken into account that it was formerly the custom to find informants who could elaborate an "authoritative" version of tradition. Also, it is often the case among the Santal, as others, that older men become specialists in ritual knowledge, so that absence of such knowledge among the young may not indicate that the knowledge is disappearing.

Since numerous accounts and several versions of the myth appear in the literature, only those major themes which are almost always present wherever there are Santal will be reported here.

[2] Culshaw 1949.

[3] Dalton 1872; Bodding 1942, originally 1887.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

but others perform the rites at less distant streams. The fact that the southern Santal often journey northward to the Damodar for funerary purposes suggests that many of them might have come from this region southward, bringing the tradition of the sacred Damodar with them. It is possible that this voyaging is either the result of recent contact with the northern Santal or consultation with the ethnographic literature about them; however, this seems unlikely since there is no particular reason why they should have chosen to borrow such an inconvenient practice from their northern co-tribals. Formerly the southern Santal deposited certain bones of the deceased at the river after performing various rites at some Hindu cremation grounds on the bank of the river. Today, a few coins are deposited in lieu of bones.*

Before the voyage to the river, members of the local lineage, together with their wives and other affinal relatives and fellow villagers of the deceased, join in rites performed within the deceased's village. However, the local lineage is responsible for supplying to the spirit of the deceased the offerings which must be accepted by his spirit as manifested in a medium. The considerable cost involved in supplying these offerings is not totally lost, since the local lineage customarily sells these offerings after returning from the river. The arrangements for this procedure represent a compromise which reveals the antagonism between solidarity and the higgling and haggling of the market. It is required that the items offered be exchanged at far less than their cost, that there be no bargaining, and that members of the local lineage, and in principle even fellow clan

* For a relatively complete account of funerary rites, see Culshaw 1949: Chap. 12.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 796 monies celebrated at approximately the same time, e.g., Sakrat (Hindi: Sankranti), and Dāsæ (Hindi: Dasserah). However, these ceremonies are celebrated with a number of distinctive Santal practices, including animal sacrifice, worship at the Sacred Grove of Santal deities, etc.

177 178 648 The pattern of Santal-Hindu relations is thus one of Hindu domination and exploitation combined with considerable cultural influence. In the nineteenth century the Santal responded to increased Hindu pressure with a number of revolts which ended in defeat. These defeats must have indicated to the Santal that their position could not be improved by armed force nor by any other political means. Following these defeats acculturation and assimilation increased. At the same time there were attempts to curtail emulation of Hinduism and to combat assimilation, indicating the existence of counter-forces favoring solidarity. The advent of the market, population pressure, and increasing wealth differences among the Santal which developed during the latter part of the nineteenth century significantly affected the processes of acculturation and assimilation.

The Advent of the Market

177 361 648 311 The spread of the market, British Indian law and British protection led to a greater influx of Hindus into the hitherto sparsely populated Chotanagpur plateau. This Hindu influx plus the general growth of population, both Hindu and tribal, rapidly reduced the amount of unexploited land. The Santal record is full of examples of hiving off and forming new villages, new local lineages, and, no doubt, new sub-clans. The *bustee* of Daredih itself, which is now filled with industrial

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 Although the Santal used to do some weaving and pottery-
439 making, they have traditionally obtained almost everything ex-
[286] cept foodstuffs and a few forest products from neighboring
[323] tribal or Hindu peoples. Even the drums and the flutes which
[534] are so integrated in the "pleasure" complex are invariably purchased from Hindu specialists. Furthermore, elite borrowings have often become "naturalized," i.e., accepted as Santal and then widely adopted so as to close the gap. Nevertheless, emulation of Hindus did not always go unnoticed and it will be recalled that there is evidence of resistance to such Hinduization.

177 The many Hindu cognates in this text give some indication
197 of the extent of linguistic borrowing. Only a few Santal kin
[601] terms are of non-Indo-European origin, and the system of
[614] dyadic relations among kin is very much like that of the Hindus; one of the largest clans, Hansdak', has a name clearly of Indo-European origin (*hans* = duck in Santali and Hindi), but one also notes the syncretism with the non-Indo-European
[538] (*dak'* = water in Santali). Even parts of the Rāmāyaṇa are sung in Santali and on occasion the Santal are allowed to enter the tale. Considering the prevalence of "parochialization" and "universalization" in India,[20] it is possible that some of what is common to the two cultures is of Santal origin. But the heavy incorporation of vocabulary clearly of Indo-European origin suggests that the flow was largely from the Hindus to the Santal.

177 Prior to industrial employment in this century a small cul-
• 178 tural gap separated the elite and common Santal. Though there
184 was some differential emulation of Hinduism it was largely of isolated traits which often became naturalized, and the basic "pleasure" orientation of the Santal was hardly altered.

[20] Marriott 1955:211.

[P. 44 is blank]

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

Chapter 3 The Rise of Education

177 The advent of the market and the failure of the Santal rebel-
178 lions to achieve significant political power led to a decrease in
464 Santal solidarity and thereby contributed to an increase in acculturation and assimilation. This effect, however, was limited so long as there was no major industrial development. But with the rise of Jamshedpur and its associated industry and educational establishments, Santal solidarity seriously declined. A critical factor in this process has been the severance of the Santal from the web of traditional social relationships resulting from migration to industrial employment.

177 In 1900 almost no southern Santal were literate and perhaps
327 none had received any formal education. By 1957 the situation
871 was markedly changed, and the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) at Jamshedpur has been the primary source of that change. TISCO has built the schools and motivated the Santal to attend them.

Two of the three colleges within the area occupied by the southern Santal were established by TISCO, one in Jamshedpur and one in Chaibasa, a town in Singhbhum. While the number

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

583 since the groom is not borne on a palanquin accompanied by hired singers and dancers, the total cost is considerably reduced. The critical ceremonial difference is that, unlike the Hindu practice of the *DB*, the vermilion is applied in front of the house [178] of the groom. This difference, which holds for all the lesser forms as well, is indicative of the generally less Hinduized ritual of the non-*DB* forms. The total cost of an *SB* is Rs. 200–500, or 800–2,000 lbs. of rice.

[192] The least prestigeful and least expensive of arranged marriages is known as *ṭunki dipil* (*TD*) (*ṭunki* = small basket; *dipil* = carried on the head), "A Small Basket Carried on the Head," or *haṛam bạriạt*, "A Groom's Party of Old Men." Most Santal say that these two names refer to the same form, but a few insist that the latter is a slightly more elaborate form. For the purpose at hand it will be adequate to treat them as identical. The name "Small Basket Carried on the Head" suggests that the bride's possessions and gifts are so few as to be portable on her head; the name "A Groom's Party of Old Men" suggests that the groom's party consists only of a few old men. A *TD* is simply an attenuated form of *SB*, with vermilion similarly applied at the groom's home. The obligation to pay bride-price is weaker and payment is frequently postponed until long after the marriage ceremony; often the debt is never settled. The total cost of a *TD* is generally Rs. 25–100, or 100–400 lbs. of rice.

[192] In addition to the three forms of arranged marriage, and unlike their Hindu neighbors, the Santal have a legitimate traditional form of unarranged or "love marriage" known as *ńapam bapla* (*NB*), "To Meet or Come Together Marriage," or more simply as *ńapam* "To Meet or Come Together." In practice this form may include public announcement, bride-price, and a

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

TABLE 2

CHOICE OF MARRIAGE FORM BY FARMERS BY PER CAPITA INCOME

Maunds per capita	*Marriage Forms*				*Income Class Total*
	DB	*SB*	*TD*	*NB*	
0–10	0	4	4	10	18
11–20	0	11	3	3	17
21–30	1	5	1	2	9
31–40	2	0	1	0	3
41	2	0	0	1	3
Total Number of Marriages	5	20	9	16	50

a few cases of comparatively well-off Santal without parents who had had an *NB*, and who explained that there was no one to arrange a marriage for them. Among the fifty sampled there were only six whose parents were both dead at the time of marriage. There were only three cases in which the father was living at the time of marriage and the mother not, and there were twenty-one cases in which only the mother was alive; however, there were no significant differences in these cases. It was therefore concluded that having a parent alive is seldom a determinant of marriage-type choice and that it is not generally relevant which parent is alive.[4]

One other type of countable information had to be considered: whether there was a shift in frequency during the forty-four-year period 1913 to 1957 in which these marriages occurred. The assembled data indicate that there were no sig-

[4] It might be significant in the very expensive *DB* but my sample was too small to detect its relevance.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

nificant shifts in frequency during this period, nor were there any appreciable changes in the distribution of per capita income.

Before considering comparable data from the *bustee*, it is necessary to examine other partial determinants of marriage-type choice so that a controlled comparison can be made. The most significant of these secondary determinants derives from the expectation by the Santal community that members of high standing will validate their status by arranging high forms of marriage—*DB* or *SB*—for their children. These marriages are the occasion for great "pleasure" and the villagers would feel deprived if their "big people" (*maraṅ hoṛ*) were to deny them this opportunity. Since inherited office confers prestige and is partially independent of wealth, it may be presumed, though adequate statistical evidence is lacking, that the holders of hereditary office often feel compelled to choose more expensive forms than income alone would dictate. In support of this contention is the observation that of the seven *DB* of which I have knowledge, all involved the marriage of a son of a hereditary village officer and one was the son of a headman. Although shared values and understandings are prominent determinants of marriage type, idiosyncratic differences such as the desire for prestige may occasionally prove decisive. "Accidents" of contact and personality may compel a young couple to enter into a "love marriage" (*NB*) against parental wishes. Finally, there is the Santal belief that the higher the form of marriage, the greater its chances of lasting. It is possible, therefore, that differences in desire for marriage stability are a factor in marriage form chosen.

From the *bustees* a sample of forty-seven was obtained, with the majority from Daredih and the rest from nearby *bustees*. All were industrial workers living in a *bustee* at the time of

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

125 154 553

marriage. They were selected by going house-to-house at various times and again no one refused to give us information. About 60 per cent of those Santal who come to Jamshedpur for industrial employment are unmarried when they arrive. The following frequencies of the different forms of marriage were obtained from this sample.

TABLE 3

178 184 583

CHOICE OF MARRIAGE FORM BY *BUSTEE* WORKERS

DB	*SB*	*TD*	*NB*	*Total Number*	*Total Percentages*
0 (0%)	6 (13%)	7 (15%)	34 (72%)	47	(100%)
		RURAL FARM WORKERS			
5 (10%)	20 (40%)	9 (18%)	16 (32%)	50	(100%)

A comparison of this data with that obtained from the village-farmer Santal shows a marked decrease in the more expensive and prestigeful *DB* and *SB* and a great increase in the cheapest and least prestigeful *NB* form, among *bustee* workers; this difference may also be regarded as a shift from arranged to unarranged marriages. If a Santal is going to have an arranged marriage of any grade, his parents or guardians must arrange it for him. The question therefore arises whether the shift to *NB* is primarily a choice made by parents or by the industrial workers who are their children. A number of lines of evidence, including the comments of workers, suggest that it is primarily their own option. While most Santal workers maintain a joint interest with their rural relatives in the family property and regularly send home some money and receive some rice, those workers who had arranged marriages

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

178 sent home at that time a larger portion of their income than
184 their fellows. Part of the money sent home was expended in
583 the celebration of arranged marriages, which for immigrant workers almost always take place in their native villages. The relatively large amount of money sent home by those who had arranged marriages reflects exceptionally strong ties with the native village; however, even most of these workers have subsequently reduced their rural contribution as their own nuclear-family requirements increased.

182 The crucial fact indicated by the following table is that if
434 one adds the industrial income of the workers at the time of
583 their marriage to the farm income of their rural families, the
184 combined per capita income is higher than that of the sample farmers. Since they must maintain separate households, these figures somewhat overstate available income for the workers. They clearly indicate, however, that the shift to *NB* cannot be attributed in any appreciable degree to lower income. Indeed even if one were to calculate per capita income of the *bustee* workers and their farming families solely on the rural income, the shift to *NB* could still not be accounted for simply by income.

Since those few migrant industrial workers who did have arranged marriages in fact sent home a large portion of their income before marrying, the inclusion of these resources in comparing marriage types seems realistic. Whereas farmers with per capita incomes of over ten maunds have only about 37% *NB*, 82% of the workers with similar income enter into such marriages. This comparison gives some indication of the degree to which the shift to *NB* runs counter to available income.

What must be explained is the shift away from the more

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

182 by data on marriage obtained from those factory workers for
184 whom the bustee is the native village. Of five such individuals,
434 all had arranged *SB* marriages and had poured the major share
583 of their income prior to marriage into the family coffers. Hence, it takes migration plus the separate income derived from industrial employment to produce a shift to love marriage.

• 178 Given that the conditions of migration to industrial employ-
184 ment provide an opportunity for the prospective groom to
584 choose what form of marriage he desires, the question of why
583 he tends to choose the unarranged *NB* remains. The answer appears to be that migration to industrial employment makes marriage primarily a matter of individual concern. In a variety of ways it weakens bonds with extended family, local lineage, and village. Since the bride will not live in the household or the village of the groom's parents, i.e., his native village, neither the parents nor the villagers are so concerned with her. Furthermore, residence in the *bustee* which, as we shall see, is not so solidary as a village, does not facilitate the reciprocal visiting between kin and fellow villagers of the couple which would normally follow a marriage tie. Since migration to industrial employment weakens traditional bonds of solidarity, it not only gives the prospective groom an opportunity to choose an unarranged marriage; it also makes groom, bride, kinsmen, and fellow villagers less desirous of an arranged marriage. All those social ties which are so dramatically expressed in marriage ceremonies and which are consistent with arranged marriages are virtually inoperative for migrants to the *bustee*. Unarranged marriages thus considered are a result of decreased solidarity resulting from migration to industrial employment.

Other considerations may be partially responsible for the

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

178 184 584 583 shift to *NB*. The Santal themselves point to the urgency felt by a new arrival in the *bustee* to get someone to cook and take care of the house; but the fact that the mean length of time immigrants spend in the *bustee* before marrying is 3.9 years and that only three of forty-seven are married within their first year of residence militates against this explanation. Any urgency that exists must be limited to the few immigrants who do not join the household of a married relative or friend, usually on a rent paying basis.

More important, freedom from parental and village restraint permits Santal men and women to meet each other and form liaisons. While this intermixing occurs to some extent even in traditional villages at festival and market time, women from moderately prosperous families have some difficulty escaping the watchful eyes of parents and kin. On the other hand, in the *bustee* no one is much interested in preventing liaisons, particularly if parents are not present. The resultant freedom is thus another manifestation of weakened ties with the traditional structure, ties which are not replaced by the *bustee*. Eighteen of the thirty-four *NB* marriages of the *bustee* Santal were contracted with working girls; it is probable that a large proportion of the remaining sixteen were with girls who were living in *bustees* while searching for work.

Evidence of one significant change emerged as an unanticipated consequence of the counting procedures used: between eleven and twenty-one years ago, about 64 per cent of the marriages in the *bustee* were *NB*, while in the period zero to ten years ago, 81 per cent were *NB*. Since per capita income was about the same during both these periods, it is possible that norms regarding marriage are gradually changing in the *bustee*.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 What began as a shift resulting from migration to industrial
178 employment and consequent weakening of traditional social
184 bonds may have affected the norms by lessening the stigma of
583 low status traditionally associated with the *NB*.
584 If one may use the term "modernization" to designate those indigenous developments or borrowings which are patently adaptive or characteristic of industrial urban societies, the shift to unarranged marriages with attenuated ceremonial is an example of modernization. Thus, while industrial development and migration to industrial employment have in a number of ways weakened Santal solidarity, the modernization which it has encouraged has in some respects suggested cultural alternatives not characteristic of traditional Hindu society. Insofar as this has been true, modernization has contributed to the maintenance of distinctiveness and solidarity and thereby inhibited
[171] assimilation. Many aspects of modernization, however, are likely to be equally operative among Hindu and Santal, especially in the long run, so that the cultures are made more alike.*

The Decline of Ceremonies in Bustee *and City*

177 Even a casual observer might note that ceremonies in the
178 *bustee* as compared with those in the village are less well at-
184 tended and often attenuated. As for the city Santal, they prac-
796 tice no communal forms of worship like those traditionally performed at the "Sacred Grove" as long as they remain in the city; often they do not even perform ancestor worship in

[114] * Dr. Milton Singer called my attention to the significance of modernization with respect to my data on marriage and ceremonial and pointed out its significance in terms of acculturation and assimilation, though I am of course responsible for the form that his remarks have assumed above.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

their Company houses. The temptation to interpret these changes as manifestations of increased secularity on a folk-urban continuum is great. However, a close look at the data suggests that the decline of ceremonies is not so much a question of increased secularity as it is a question of situational factors involved in migration to industrial employment. These factors operate directly to inhibit ceremonial practice and participation and operate indirectly to the same end by contributing to lack of solidarity in the *bustee* and city. Since ceremony both reflects and reinforces solidarity, its decline is both a cause and an effect of declining solidarity.

In the course of field work, I observed and participated in a number of ceremonies in the village, Fanderkuta, and the *bustee*, Daredih. Information concerning ceremonial practices was also obtained by interviews with informants from a variety of villages and *bustees*. Because of a suspicion that my presence, particularly in Daredih, had significantly altered the usual practice, my field assistant observed and reported on one ceremony, *Baha*, after I had left India. His report indicates that my suspicions were well founded. The reasons for decreased participation in and attenuation of ceremonies in the *bustee* as compared with the village are readily apparent if one examines the *Baha* ceremony as practiced in the two communities. Similar reports could be given of any of the other communal ceremonies.

Baha is the great spring festival celebrated in March• and ranking second in importance among annual ceremonies.† The word *Baha* means flower and refers here to the flowers of the Sal tree (*sarjom*; *shorea robusta*) and of the tree known as

• Actually in the Hindu month of *Phalgun* (February–March).

† The most important is known as *Sohrae* and will be briefly discussed later.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

184 796 priest's brothers remarked that "the working people come only when it is time to eat." The priest also complained of this, as he had done at several other ceremonies. However, [123] there were many more present than is usual, for my camera and the prospect of having a photograph taken which might later be obtained from me was a potent lure to these people. My assistant reported almost no workers present at these same rites after I had left India. The remainder of the ceremonies are performed as in the village, except that there is no procession of dancing men and women to lead the priest back into the village.

184 771 776 The attenuation of the ceremony and the relative non-participation of migrant industrial workers is not significantly the result of secularization. In spite of many interviews and casual discussions about the supernatural I found little evidence of decreased belief in the deities or the efficacy of rites. Also, many of these men occasionally returned to their villages for various festivals, and when I saw such men in their native villages I found their participation as ardent and regular as that of any villager.

177 178 184 796 In my view the most important cause of this attenuation of, and non-participation in, ceremonies is limited identification with the *bustee*, and there is evidence that this is the result of migration to industrial employment. The second most important cause of attenuation and non-participation is the time demands of industrial employment.

[621] [464] Those who participate most regularly and fully have strong grounds for identifying with the *bustee*. Almost all are natives of Daredih. The two other regular and full participants include the only immigrant worker who has bought land in Daredih and a very early immigrant who has become assistant headman.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 The former, who had no land in his native village, frequently
178 told me that for him Daredih was his village; the latter, by
184 virtue of his position, of which he is extremely proud, is re-
796 quired to attend rites, and no doubt his status makes the *bustee*
621 and its deities more his own than would otherwise be the case. The others, who have neither agricultural land nor position in Daredih, feel that it is not their village, that the local gods are not quite their gods, that the priest is not quite their priest, and that the founder of the village is not the founder of their village. This lack of commitment is reflected in both the attenuation of and non-participation in the various ceremonies of *Baha*. The Santal themselves say, "Here all are workers so we don't worship so much," or simply, "Here we don't worship so much."

[769] This interpretation rather than secularization is supported by the observation that ancestor worship is generally practiced even by those who do not attend the community rites performed by the priest; in ancestor worship it is, of course, one's own ancestors who receive the offering. The failure to dance before the priest's house and the failure to provide him with a dancing procession to and from the Sacred Grove are indications that he is not quite their priest; the same explanation accounts for their frequent failure to contribute to the sacrifices on behalf of the *bustee*. Indeed, the Santal themselves regard all of these acts as signs of respect to the village leaders, and as already indicated, the priest often complains on this score.

Nor can all these acts, which both express and serve to weaken the solidarity of Daredih, be entirely due to the time
[793] demands of industrial employment. The priest is himself an industrial worker, as are many of his patrilineal relatives who live in Daredih, and they are regular participants. Also, the

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 number of immigrant workers present when it comes time to
178 eat the offerings that have been made, drink the rice beer which
184 has been offered, and join in secular dancing for pleasure is
796 invariably greater than those present during the performance
621 of village ceremonials.

It is not that the immigrant workers regard it as wrong to worship the deities of the *bustee*'s Sacred Grove or to offer respect to its priest and founder; on occasion and in varying degrees they will do both. Except for "Old Man Headman" and the boundary deities, the same beings are celebrated in their native villages. It is rather a question of having less attachment than of opposition. As these workers say when asked about non-participation, "It is all right because all is being done properly in my native village."

182 Typically, migration to industrial employment does not re-
423 sult in acquisition of agricultural land at the new place of
464 residence; both limited availability of land in such areas as
621 well as alternative employment make this difficult. Lack of agricultural land belonging to the *bustee* limits identification. Ownership of such land has the opposite effect; as the regular attendance at Daredih's communal ceremonies by immigrant workers who had purchased land there tends to show. Similarly, the Santal have a long history of migration, and Santal who move to a new village where they acquire land show none of the signs of lack of identification characteristic of immigrant workers in Daredih. Thus it is not simply migration which is responsible for diminished solidarity, but migration to industrial employment.

177 The *Baha* festival was, of course, not the only ceremonial
178 casualty of migration to industrial employment of which I saw
184 evidence at Daredih. At the great *Sohrae* festival, held in Oc-
796

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 tober when the harvest is in, the final fourth day's rites are
178 eliminated; these are primarily concerned with collecting and
184 stealing rice beer and food from all the houses. During this
796 festival a rite is performed in which the villagers' cows are made to walk over an area where some eggs have been placed. The owner of the cow which first breaks an egg is considered propitious, and he is required to repay the deities for his good fortune by providing the rice beer to be offered on the following year. At the ceremony in Daredih few were in attendance, and that few did not include the immigrant worker whose cow had previously broken the egg, so that another man had to provide the rice beer. Finally, there was a noisy dispute within the *bustee* because the immigrant workers assembled for dancing on the dancing ground (*akhra*) in their section rather than before the house of the headman, as they should have done according to tradition.

At the festival of Sakrat in mid-February, the third most elaborate ceremony, the custom of going house-to-house to collect rice beer is shortened from three days to one day; in addition, a rite in which arrows are shot at pole targets is not practiced. At a village not half a mile further away from the town and only a short distance from Daredih arrow-shooting is practiced; but in this village almost all are native villagers practicing agriculture though the headman and a few others are factory workers besides being farmers. This negative instance of attenuation and non-participation provides further proof of the critical significance of migration to industrial employment.

182 If limited identification with the *bustee* is primarily respon-
184 sible for the decline of ceremony, the time demands of indus-
796 trial employment have been an unwitting accomplice. The time

466
177

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

Chapter 5 The Extent of Hindu Absorption

The effects of migration to industrial employment thus far analyzed have been to accelerate the decline of Santal solidarity among the Santal generally and especially among Santal industrial workers. It has thus furthered the same tendency which the closure of the political rank path and the spread of the market and of increased wealth differences accelerated. Before moving on, it is useful to consider how much Hindu social absorption has accompanied this decline in solidarity.

Indian census material on religious identification is often cited as evidence of Hindu social absorption. Converting such figures on the southern Santal to percentages, the following table can be constructed. Conclusions from these figures, which indicate very little in the way of a trend, must be drawn with extreme caution.

My own field observations suggest that these figures do not reflect major changes in religious belief and practice. There are virtually no villages where half or even one-tenth of the Santal practice Hindu rituals distinct from the ritual practices of the other Santal residents, nor is there some sizable propor-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF SANTAL RETURNED AS HINDU

(Census of India 1931)*

	1901	1911	1921	1931
Orissa	44	46	43	48
Chota Nagpur Feudatory States (Seraikela, Kharswan)		0	18	48
Singhbhum	16	3	56	23

tion of villages which follow distinctively Hindu religious practices. I have heard of only one Santal village within the territory occupied by the southern Santal which has abandoned traditional forms of worship and become thoroughly Hinduized. In 1916 Roy reported the conversion to Hinduism of a number of Santal in a Hindu village in Orissa; they were served by an outcast Brahman priest.[1] I met only one Santal who had taken up Hindu religious practices, and he lived in the city of Jamshedpur. Nowhere that I went were Santal served by Brahmans, though in some areas Santal families are occasionally visited by members of the Potkar caste, who bring messages from the dead for a fee. The Santal also employ females of various low Hindu castes to deliver their children and sometimes patronize Hindu practitioners of traditional medicine (*Kubraj*; Hindi).

It is true that until recently the Santal in large numbers took part, in their own way, in various Hindu festivals. At many of the major Hindu festivals the Santal would assemble for mixed dancing, and some would become possessed and speak

* More recent census figures do not contain this information because "caste has been abolished" as a legal entity.

[1] Roy, 1916.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

your religion. Are you Hindu, Muslim, Christian, or what?" By this means the census-takers might obtain the desired result. However, it should be remembered that neither Culshaw, who is a Christian missionary, nor the presently very communally oriented Santal are disinterested observers.

There is no question that since the 1920's at least, Hindu organizations like Arya Samaj have actively campaigned to get tribals to declare themselves as Hindus. Such declarations were regarded as demonstrations of national unity and as refutations of the charge that India was so culturally and socially diverse as to be incapable of nationhood. In view of Hindu pressures and census irregularities, the returns reported may at the most indicate that Santals were finding it increasingly difficult to muster the solidarity to resist Hindu pressure for common religious identification. At the very least, the returns may simply reflect Hindu pressure generated by the Independence Movement.

In spite of the manifold pressures operating to weaken Santal solidarity, there are few cases of actual social absorption. Apparently, the endogenous forces contributing to solidarity have been sufficient to prevent this from happening. However, in view of the experience of other tribes and because of the increase in centrifugal pressures created by industrial employment, it appears that further social absorption was imminent. Certainly centrifugal pressures had increased, and if the political rank path had not suddenly reopened in the 1930's, it seems likely that the Santal would have become as Hinduized as their neighbors, the Bhumij.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

Chapter 7 The "Great Tradition"

177 One might say that the Santal have been in search of a "great
• 178 tradition" since the time that they conceded the social and
668 cultural superiority of their Hindu neighbors. Having taken much from these neighbors, but desirous of maintaining their identity, they decided to create a "great tradition" of their own rather than accept the one belonging to their neighbors.
[212] There is, for example, an attempt to codify Santal traditions in writing and even the development of a distinctive script in
[771] which to record these traditions. In place of an essentially inexplicit religious ideology expressed in ritual, there is the development of an explicit religious ideology with an emphasis on morality. There is also the elaboration of literary forms wholly unlike the unpretentious traditional ones. Paradoxically, while these developments involve rejection of numerous Hindu practices, they introduce fundamental beliefs and values of Hinduism which previously had made hardly any progress among the Santal. Thus, while distinctive traits are re-emphasized, the configurations and orientation of Santal culture become somewhat more like those of the Hindus. However,

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

innovative patterns are also arising, particularly through the fusing of traditional and Hindu patterns.

I do not want to portray this striking cultural development as more profane than it is by giving undue emphasis to its connections with political objectives and pursuit of rank. Nevertheless, one must begin by recognizing that this is its source. As very grossly advocated by a somewhat naïve Santal industrial worker who has become a "Member of the Legislative Assembly," the movement is spoken of in the following terms: "We should not leave our religion; we should continue to use rice beer; we should have our worship at the Sacred Grove; also we should not stop eating beef. If we stop eating it our Santal caste will be gone. We will call our religion *Sarna Dhorom** and will tell everyone that our religion is *Sarna Dhorom*." Another Santal entered the conversation saying, "Yes, like Mussulman *Dhorom*, Christian *Dhorom*, so we will call ours *Sarna Dhorom*." A third Santal said, "Yes, if we say *Santal Dhorom*, that is our caste; as the Christians have a church, so our 'temple' (*mandir*; Hindi) is the Sacred Grove." The MLA brought the conversation to a close and down to "practical" matters by saying: "We will maintain our 'drama club'; we will keep our 'culture'; if we keep our 'culture' the government will give us money; if you do a drama I will bring big officers of the Jharkhand party to see."

There are sections of Jharkhand political rallies with such a concentration on culture that one might imagine himself at a festival rather than a political meeting. The local club may perform a play at such a meeting; traditional dances may be

* *Sarna* is the Munda word for "Sacred Grove" (*Jahar* in Santali); *Dhorom* is the Oriya form meaning roughly "religion."

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

668 arranged by Jharkhand leaders, some of whom would themselves be ashamed to dance. So potent a political weapon is culture that the great crime of a Santal-elected official who went over to the Congress was that he wrote a pamphlet in which he argued that the Mundari languages were related to Oriya.

Though the cultural movement is intimately connected with politics, the elite who are sparking the movement are quite sincere in their cultural efforts; men are indeed usually capable of sincerely believing in that which is necessary to the pursuit of rank. The sophisticated Santal believes that he is contributing to a resurgence of tribal tradition and at the same time raising it to a higher level. And so he is. But neither the grounds on which he justifies his act nor its effect are the sufficient causes of the cultural movement. Yet despite the basically political source of its energy, the cultural movement has acquired an impetus of its own. There is honor to be gained through cultural creativity, and the Santal elite have begun to experience the pleasure of cultural innovation per se.

The distinctive traits re-emphasized in the new movement are chiefly those mentioned by the MLA whose remarks are recorded above. They are beef eating and cow sacrifice, traditional dances, drinking and offering rice beer, and worship of the traditional gods at the Sacred Grove. The low rank value of these traits makes them ideal boundary markers. These traits serve not only to bind together the Santal but are held in common with most of the tribes which support the Jharkhand movement. They are the banners under which the Jharkhanders march, and their contrast with Hindu banners is conspicuous. Unfortunately, beef eating and dancing are particularly difficult for the educated elite, so that their preaching is often better

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 than their practice. For them these are the unresolvable necessities of the new rank path. Some of these Santal whom we met in 1957 had just begun to eat beef again; happily, one city Santal read in a magazine about the virtues of beef eating for health, and his discovery quickly diffused among the rest of the city Santal. Once I saw a young party activist who had grown up during the Jharkhand movement persuading an older Santal with a few years of education that he must take up beef eating again if he wished to preserve the Santal caste. The emphasis given to these distinctive traits serves, of course, not only to keep Santal and Hindu apart but also to narrow the gap between the elite and the ordinary Santal.

177 178 668 [262]

One of the fundamental changes being wrought in Santal culture is an increased emphasis on work, study, and rank attainment and a concomitant discouragement of "pleasure." A number of recent songs like the following carry this message.

177 178 539 668

> At work time I become drunk and forget my work.
> At the time for study I spent my time making friends;
> I forgot all about reading and writing.
>
> *Babu*, boys the same age as you have become pundits at Tata school.
> Oh brother in the city of Delhi they have become members of parliament.
> Oh brother you were born in a long village.
> Oh brother you grew up among friends.
> Oh brother you have only become a pundit in divorced women.

Notice in the following song carrying a message like those above the use of un-Santal-like metaphors in the manner of the new "great tradition."

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 You want to reach the fruit,
178 Without effort you can't reach the higher fruit.
539 Make your mind hard!
668 Release your soul!
Be energetic with your body!
Then you shall reach the fruit which hangs high.

Other songs with Calypso-like Santal manner carry the message of Jharkhand, the necessity of maintaining distinctiveness, the moral-religious connection, and in some cases the new great-traditional style. Notice in particular the intermingling of these themes in these stanzas:

We are natives of this country,
Yet they are driving us out;
They are driving us from our birthplace.
Be learned, brother, be knowing, be a man.

Jai Pal Singh protects us against other castes.
Raghnath Murmu [the founder of a cultural organization] will make us learned and wise.

In the country of Dhalbhum the *Tamak* [a kind of drum] sounds.
In Hanuman's forest the Sakwa [a wild buffalo horn] sounds.
In the "aboriginal" land the deer are devouring the forest.
Sam and Supai [two Jharkhand candidates] sound the bell;
Come great Jai Pal and sound the *Sakwa* to drive the deer away.

For the man of today, *haeri haeri* [ai ai]
On a tree of trouble grows troubled fruit.
Because of sin the body is pained, *haeri haeri.*
Since we are poor we get only *matkom lathe* [a nearly inedible fruit from which the liquor *parua* is made].

The Santal

177 Millet we never get.
178 Day by day we starve and become desiccated, *harri*.
178 Dirty grass huts, poverty, and sickness cause us to moan, *haeri*.
539 Continuous sickness follows us all our life.
668 Who will cure this?

Marań Buru is like an *ojha* [medicine man in Santali and Hindi]
He will end this sickness.
Let us drive out this evil by applying our intelligence.
Let us drive it out with our sacred prayers.
This religion will wipe away the sin.
With the help of religion let us bid this evil go.
Then we will obtain heaven's reward, god-given love and joy.
Through religion the poverty and sickness of hell will vanish.

This last song in particular is interspersed with Oriya and [177] Sanskritic words. It also introduces heaven and hell, neither of which has a place in the traditional religion; but Marań Buru, the tribal deity of the Santal, retains his place, and leaders of the Jharkhand political movement are prominent.

The shame which the elite leaders feel for the traditional "pleasure" orientation is expressed in the following song:

After drinking rice beer,
After getting drunk,
A man walks with his *dhoti* falling to the ground.
Seeing all these bad things the aboriginal brother becomes sorrowful.

177 There are several reasons why the traditional "pleasure"
178 orientation is opposed. As already suggested, it is an attribute
181 of low status in the prevailing system of caste ranking, and
668 the elite have internalized a distaste for it, especially for its

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 more manifest appearances. For this reason they particularly
• 178 oppose mixed dancing. As the songs above make plain, "pleas-
181 ure" is felt to be a detriment to study, hard work, mobility,
668 and the "progress" of tribals. Almost all Santal industrial workers condemn "too much pleasure," and even in remote villages it is generally felt that "pleasure" needs to be curtailed. However, it is only the educated, and not by any means all of them, who have deeply internalized this attitude and who can make it work for them. At a "fair" (*paṭa* in Hindi and Santali) more than half the Santal present said that fairs are bad; "at these fairs we only run around like dogs and spend our money"; but they were participating nevertheless and having considerable "pleasure."

[871] It is a fact that many Santal fail in school because they are lured away from their studies by the traditional "pleasure"
[461] activities. Similarly, there are some absences without leave from TISCO and some instances of coming to work drunk which are the result of too much "pleasure," particularly during festivals. Through songs, plays, speeches, and even prayers, the new cultural movement has succeeded in making most Santal feel that they ought not to over-indulge; but it would be too much to say that it has succeeded in changing the dominant motif of Santal culture. However, the commitment to personal and tribal mobility and the inhibition of "pleasure" are continually reinforced by the obvious increase in the possibilities of advancement.

[861] It is not yet common in the villages but everywhere apparent in the *bustees* and in Jamshedpur that fathers scold their children for wasting time and remind them that if they do not study they shall end up "throwing about dung" or performing other menial jobs requiring hard and undignified labor. Most

I: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

Most

177 of the young children of Santal industrial workers aspire to
• 178 a "sitting-down job," if not in Delhi then at least in TISCO.
555 The tension induced by the conflict between rank improvement and the pleasure complex is evident in the demeanor of the young Santal trying to resist the old siren songs of their culture. The Santal of ordinary means recognizes that life is generally short and hazardous and that the path to success is arduous and the goal uncertain of attainment. Under such circumstances it is remarkable how many Santal are committed to rank improvement.

177 The disruptive force of "envy" and associated witchcraft
178 has been attacked in two fashions. All but the most isolated
754 Santal now believe that "envy," and with it witchcraft and
871 much disease, will disappear as the Santal, especially their females, become educated. The rationale for this hope is that education will impart virtue and improve rank; how then will it be possible for the virtuous and prosperous to be envious? As the Santal point out, the "educated *diku* women do not practice witchcraft, so neither will ours once they are similarly educated."

668 The second anti-"envy" doctrine is more sophisticated, has
754 Great-Traditional qualities, and is a genuine example of cultural innovation. It was developed by a brilliant Santal high-school graduate, Ragnath Murmu, who lived for some time in a *bustee*, where he carried on "cultural work"; he has since retired to his native village. According to his view, there are witches who practice witchcraft because of "envy." However, they can cause sickness only in a person who has committed some sin. The solution to the problem of illness which is caused in part by witchcraft and in part by one's own sin is to live a

538 668 The great task that Semlet' hopes soon to undertake, and for which money is being collected, is to provide an authoritative text of Santal tradition written in the new script. At periodic Semlet' meetings one may observe eloquent representations of the cultural movement and its intimate connection with solidarity and the political rank path.

178 539 668 782 In place of traditional prayers such as: "Greetings, *Marak Buru*; in the name of this festival I offer you so do not allow any sickness, headache, or stomach ache to come. We give to you that we may remain in good health," one hears prayers more in keeping with an emergent "Great Tradition" such as the following: "Greetings, *Marak Buru*; be kind enough and pleased to accept my bowing and greeting. I prostrate myself before you and direct my attention to you. Come down as the wind and fly like a storm. Guide me in the path of righteousness. I bow down in all directions."

668 539 771 The following excerpts from typical speeches at Semlet' meetings give an "inside view" of the cultural movement and its social significance:

> In one village people stopped worshipping in the Sacred Grove and began to follow a Hindu sect which makes no offerings but only prays. Within three years they fell ill in every house. . . . Some "medicine man" from another village told them it is because you stopped worshipping in the Sacred Grove, so they returned to their old ways. Other people's religions will not make us strong. We should worship properly, then we can raise our religion so many will respect it.

> In ancient times it was said, and our "aboriginal" leaders also say, Sarna is our religion. The *dikus* say our religion is Hindu. Then

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) · 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

668 539 771 ligion. . . . Some literate people also are leading us in a bad direction. In eating and clothing we often follow the *diku* way; we are departing from the way of our own society.

177 • 178 796 The final cultural manifestation to be discussed brings us back to the Durga Puja anecdote with which this chapter began. In the spirit of solidarity every effort is being made to prevent attendance at and participation in Hindu ceremonies. One of the dangers inherent in attendance and participation is the emulation of Hindu ways and the development of Hindu identification. The second danger stems from the manner of Santal participation, i.e., the Santal tendency to engage in mixed dancing, to become drunk, and in general to publicly display those forms of "pleasure" which are the attributes of low rank. The third danger bears a resemblance to the objection voiced by the city Santal, Mr. F., that the Santal are cheated by the clever *dikus*. No doubt there is some cheating, but what is really objectionable is that on such occasions considerable money is spent on "pleasure" and is thus not available for the serious business of rank improvement.

184 668 796 A more positive attempt to increase solidarity is the recent effort to get all Santal villages to celebrate their festivals simultaneously and to set the dates for such occasions so that they will not coincide with Hindu ceremonies. This effort has had a limited success in Mayurbhanj but has not been adopted generally because (1) the traditionally important visiting and reciprocity made possible by non-simultaneous ceremonies would have to be sacrificed, and (2) industrial workers now attending those of their own festivals which are held at the same time as Hindu ones on "free time" (permissible leave periods during which they are paid) would have to take leave without pay or forego all ceremonies. In principle, however,

[p. 1]

FOREWORD

Fifty years ago, in 1887, the late Rev. L. O. Skrefsrud published The Traditions and Institutions of the Santhals, Horkoren Mare Hapramko reak Katha, as a guide for the Santals, especially in the customary matters dealt with in the book, and also on account of its ethnological value. It was re-edited by me, in 1916 and 1929, only with a short preface and a few pages of fresh matter, added at the end, at the request of certain Santals. What here follows is a translation with a number of explanatory footnotes and some additional matter. As only a very few would be able to use the work in the original Santali, and as it is of considerable ethnological interest, I have repeatedly been asked to translate it. My translation is absolutely literal, in order to enable the reader, as far as possible, to understand the Santal mentality and way of expression. 128

With the exception of a short story of the Santal insurrection of 1855 the original work was taken down by Skrefsrud from the mouth of an old guru, named Kolean. According to a statement towards the end of the book the dictation was finished on the 15th of February, 1871. 115 128

Skrefsrud once told me, that he had hunted everywhere among the Santals to find a man who knew his people and their traditions and customs, and that Kolean without comparison was the best authority he had been able to find. Skrefsrud further told me, that the book contains absolutely nothing of his own, the whole being a faithful record of Kolean's words and language.

I cannot, however, help thinking that Skrefsrud had something to do with the arrangement. The language is easy and fine, and Kolean's narrative was based on oral tradition handed down verbatim by teacher to disciple, from generation to generation, a practice which, as Skrefsrud states in the Annual Report of the Mission for the year 1887—88, "has now fallen into disuse". 128 538

This does not exclude the possibility of our learning something from other sources, and some Santals have actually narrated things which Kolean did not mention. Sometimes we can see that such tales are adaptations of Hindu lore, as when some gurus maintain that their ancestors followed Rama to fight Ravona in Ceylon. In other cases, especially with regard to Santal customs and institutions, we may have to do with independent lines of tradition. 115 [177] [178] [538]

Kolean hailed, as he tells at the end, from a village called Pabsa in a "country" (rural district) called Pandra in the district of Manbhum to the southwest of the Santal Parganas.

1 Oslo Bin. Mus. – Bodding.

2: Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

He stated that he was a disciple of a guru named Duku. Together with other Santals he had emigrated eastwards. His old home being in Manbhum explains that some very few of his statements are different from what is the present custom in the Santal Parganas.

Kolean was a guru, a designation borrowed from the Hindus but adapted to suit Santal society. A Santal guru is a man who is supposed to know certain things, e. g., what should be recited at some ceremonial functions, and who is able to act as a reciter when called upon to do so. Any Santal can become a guru, by attaching himself to an older guru and gradually learning from him. In this way we cannot expect absolute uniformity throughout.

The use of such recitations may partly be due to imitation of Hindu customs, and there are definite statements in the traditional tales here translated to the effect that the ancestors on a certain occasion, after long deliberations, decided to abandon some customs of their own and to adopt Hindu usages instead. In this connexion it is of interest to note that the Santals often use songs in a foreign language, notably Bihari, during their festivals and at cremations. And it is a curious fact that many Santals do not understand these songs. It is evident that we have, to some extent, to do with borrowings, but it would be an exaggeration to maintain that the whole has been borrowed.

The traditional history of the world as contained in the first part of Kolean's narrative is recited twice in connexion with the life of every Santal, first at the *caco chatiar*, when a child is ceremoniously given full social right, and finally at the *bhaṇḍan*, the funeral ceremony, when the deceased is handed over to the next world and to the care of the departed ancestors.

P. O. Bodding.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

584 787 axe, firewood on a woman's head, a snake or a jackal crossing the road in front of them, it is a bad omen, and they return home. But if they, within the boundary of their own village, or of the girl's village, see a full vessel, a cow, a new earthenware vessel, a pack bullock, or the footmarks of a tiger, these are excellent omens[2] for them; therefore they go in to the Jǫg Mạńjhi of the girl's village. (This in connexion with omens is nowadays only custom, because the boy's father tells the village headman in advance, viz., on such and such a day we shall, in the early morning, go to have a look at a vessel; warn the people of the village that they must not at that time touch anything that will hinder. The marriage-broker also tells the headman of the girl's village that the people of his village may behave in the same way.)

584 The marriage-broker says to the Jǫg Mạńjhi: We have come to see a vessel; you, please, show us this piece. The Jǫg Mạńjhi then goes to the house of the girl's father and tells them: The friends have come. They reply: Very well. Then the Jǫg Mạńjhi says to the girl: Come a couple of you girls to our house; some visitors have come to us; you pour out water[3] for them, we have no one to do it. The girl's parents then say to their daughter: Do go, girl. Then some three girls go; when they arrive there they go round and bow to all who are gathered. The girl concerned keeps her place as the middle one of the three, in order not to be ashamed. The marriage-broker then whispers to the boy's parents, saying: Look at the one in the middle. When they have greeted all, the girls will stand there for a moment and then go home. When they have left, the Jǫg Mạńjhi asks the marriage-broker: Well, how is it? Are you satisfied or not? The visitors answer: Yes, it is all right, so far as we are concerned; we are pleased; the question is whether they also will be pleased.

The Jǫg Mạńjhi then goes to the home of the girl's parents, who ask him: How is it, Jǫg Mạńjhi, what did the friends say? Are they pleased or not? The Jǫg Mạńjhi replies: The friends have said it is all right, they are pleased. The girl's father then says to the Jǫg Mạńjhi: Please, bring the friends here, they must drink some water before they leave. The Jǫg Mạńjhi returns to his own house and says to the visitors: Please, Sir Marriage-Broker, the friends are calling us, we shall drink some water before leaving. The young man's party say: No, not so, it is well as it is; shall we not drink later on? Surely we shall. If the girl's father has brewed beer or something, the Jǫg Mạńjhi speaks earnestly to them: Come along, you need not sit down, I shall not keep you for many moments. They consequently understand that they have brewed beer; then they go. The Jǫg Mạńjhi takes them along. The girls are there. As soon as the visitors arrive, they, i. e., the girls, bring them bedsteads, stools, pieces of wood to sit on. Pouring out water for them they again salute them. When this is done, the girl's parents greet the

[178] [787] [576]

[2] Omens seem to be paid less attention to now than formerly; Kolean's remarks, put within parenthesis, are significant. [3] Visitors from a distance get their feet washed. It is an act of courtesy.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

585 [167] brought there, this they also offer to him. The anointing girls now carry the bridegroom on their hip to the end of the village street and set him down there, and from there they return home. The marriage-broker conducts the bridegroom's party to the bride's home, carrying a kettle-drum along. Nowadays they go taking with them big drums, trumpets, horns, tubas, cornets, palanquins, rockets, catherine-wheels, bombs, guns, and so on, that is to say, wealthy people do this; but such things were not used formerly, and we did not employ Doms to drum.

[534] [178] When the bridegroom's party reach the bride's village, they call a halt at the entrance to the village street. The marriage-broker goes to the bride's home and says to them: We have arrived; if there is anything you have not got ready, finish it quickly. They answer him: We are ready. The Jog Mañjhi now at once sends the Godet to summon the village people. They come there; they anoint themselves with oil and turmeric, beer they also drink, and all married women apply sindur[36] to themselves, but not spinsters, divorced ones, or widows.

[302] Now the Jog Mañjhi makes the Godet carry a vessel with water on his shoulder, and he himself carries a lota with water, standing on a leaf-plate, kept on the palm of his hand turned upwards; they both go to the bridegroom's party, who have been dancing in the meantime. Seeing the Jog Mañjhi they stop. The Jog Mañjhi and the Godet say: Please, friends, drink water. The Jog Mañjhi hands the lota with water to the bridegroom's party; they receive it with both hands; thereupon they salute each other, and the bridegroom's party drink.

Thereupon the bride's mother, carrying on the up-turned palm of her hand a lota with water and a leaf-cup with molasses standing on a brass-plate, conducts the bride's party and the anointing girls on the bride's side and the women of the village to the end of the village street to meet the bridegroom with water. When they have reached there, she says to the marriage-broker: Bring the bridegroom here, we shall give them molasses to eat and water to drink. When the bridegroom's party and the bride's party have greeted each other and thus become one party, they dance. The marriage-broker says to the bride's mother: Look here, this one is the bridegroom. He salutes his mother-in-law and also a couple of the women. When the other women and the anointing girls see the bridegroom, [539] they sing a number of abusive songs:

To-day, they say, to-day he will come, to-morrow, they say, to-morrow he will come;
How big a wealthy man's son is he, that we must wait until midnight?

Thy mother made friends with a dog,
Thy mother made friends with a cat.
Fie, fie, to a bastard,
My daughter I do not give.[37]

[302]

[36] The sindur, the blood-red vermilion, is applied to the forehead at the parting of the hair, just enough to show that the lady has a husband living. A Hindu custom. [37] These two verses are in a kind of Hindi; the following verses are all in Santali.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

of the very best bullocks or buffaloes to the house of the village headman, and the two killed castrated animals they also take there. 583

The village headman now calls the village people together to a council meeting, and they judge in the matter. They follow the matter up, to find out how it happened. They then also send a couple of men to the girl's home and ask her whether it was with her consent or forcibly that the young man applied sindur to her, and they take with them also from the girl's home a castrated animal (goat or pig). The three castrated animals the people of both sides eat, and the cattle the headman of the young man's side and the village council give in charge to the village headman of the girl's side, until the father of the young man pays the fine money. The girl's father gets sixteen rupees without giving anything in return, whether the young man gets the girl or not. And the headman of the young man's village gets five rupees from the father of the young man. This they call the head-saving rupees. Formerly they have sometimes beaten such a young man to death on account of the crime of forcibly applying sindur to a girl. And this they did not take up for inquiry. The village headman stands to shelter the young man; therefore he gets the money. Of these five rupees the headman gives two rupees to his village people as their share. A girl that has got sindur applied to her they, with a few exceptions, give in marriage to the young man. They afterwards marry the two over again as at the marriage of bachelor and spinster. And if they do not bestow the girl on the young man, she becomes a divorcee. [178]

1. About getting a second wife.

In bygone days they were living satisfied with only one wife; none had two wives. And also nowadays, if they out of licentiousness get two or three wives, they do not call this good; and there are very few such people. But if a man's wife does not get children, then the husband may, both of them agreeing, take a co-wife. The first wife rules the household. And if the elder brother of the husband dies, then his younger brother can, even if he has a wife, keep his sister-in-law as a wife, and they do this in order that the children may not be alienated. And this they do not deem bad. But if some one's younger brother dies, then an elder brother cannot keep this one's wife. A younger brother's wife they honour equal to a bonga, — they do not even touch their bedsteads. 595

Those who commit the fault of getting two wives, will afterwards reap the fruit of this, because a first wife and a co-wife will not live in peace. People say: "A co-wife, needle pricks, they prick"; "a co-wife, ebony firewood, crackles"; "a co-wife, a hen with just hatched out chickens, at loggerheads, they are not reconciled"; "a first wife, kicked in going, kicked in coming, they will endure it"; "co-wives make a dull sound with a wooden slab rapping with the feet"; "a co-wife, the itching of the etka[68], cannot be endured". [539]

[68] Mucuna pruriens, DC., produces an intense itching.

11 Oslo Etn. Mus. — Bodding.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

6. Divorce.

Formerly people were separated only for two reasons, viz., the woman's adultery and witchcraft. Nowadays, if husband and wife will not live in peace, they "tear the leaves" also for this reason. From the time that they have commenced to take co-wives, a wife also can demand divorce for this reason. If they are separated on account of witchcraft, a woman may be married again without having had "the leaves torn", otherwise only when this has been properly done. The customary rule of separation because of the woman's adultery has been mentioned above. 586 178 586 754

If anyone's wife has been established to be a witch by five witch-finders, her husband will, together with the village council, give her in charge in the house of her parents or of her male relatives, and even a child of hers he will rob her of and keep; and if she has a sucking child, he will afterwards bring home this child of his, paying the woman for its support. There is no punishment or the like for this act, only the village council will get food. And if afterwards a daughter grows up and is married, this woman will not get the cloth given to a mother. 586

Nowadays, when a divorce is due to their not living in peace, the guilty person will have to pay a fine. If a man leaves his wife without any fault of hers, he will not get the brideprice paid back, and he will himself have to pay damages. Any children will belong to the man, and he will have to give his wife a cow, one bundle paddy, one brass-cup, and a piece of women's cloth. And if she feeds a sucking child of his, she will, when he fetches the child, get separately for this sixteen maunds paddy and one cloth. If there should have been any expense in connexion with the child during fever or illness, this also the mother will get.

If husband and wife separate on account of the woman's fault, the man will get the brideprice paid back, and the woman will get nothing. Food for the village council sitting in the matter they will take from both sides, five four-anna bits from each.

When the wife demands divorce because the husband has taken a co-wife, the man will not get the brideprice paid back, and he will have to give a cow, one bundle paddy, a cloth, and a brass-cup.

They tear the leaves in the following way: The village headmen and the village people of both sides come together. They put a loṭa with water on the ground, and make the husband and wife stand with this between them, facing each other. The headman of the husband's village then says: Well, you so and so, we the people of our village, invocating the Day bonga, the Five mountain spirits, and the ancestors of old, having got good omens, a bullock on the right-hand side, a woodpecker on the left-hand side, we bound together, joined together the bonds like the laṛ climber, the bando climber[88]; for one day we did

[88] Laṛ here refers to the jaw laṛ, Roxburghia Vahlii, W. & A. Bando is Spathoglottis Rexburghii, Benth.

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

464 One kind of poor people do not become absolute paupers, because when they have no necessary work of their own, they work for wages with wealthy people; thereby they get their subsistence, and people also feel compassion with them. They put their children to work as cattle-herds, or they make them fetch water and leaves, and people give them more than what they have a right to get, and when their children go to glean at harvest time, they leave much for them. People who have no bodily strength they also help in the same way, if they have no relatives who are able to help them. And when orphans 736 have no natural helpers, the village headman and his deputy will take such friendless ones to themselves, and they live in great ease, because no one will be able to snub them calling them orphans. Afterwards when they have grown up, they marry them off. Formerly there were no begging people, and also nowadays only a very few have learnt to beg from the Dekes and walk round in the villages and beg; this they do not call good, and there is no need; because if they have a wish to work, they may easily support themselves in the villages. Halt and lame, blind and not fully developed persons might get gruel, by only watching the houses and doors of people.

556 Some good people could easily become wealthy; they have plough-cattle, they also have working people; but from fear of people they do not become very wealthy. They earn only just as much as to get food. Some women, it is said, are very envious of wealthy people; they say: These have very fine things to eat and drink; we have nothing. Then they cast an evil spell on them; then these wealthy people become ill, they become utter paupers, and they die. And such women also bury bongas in the house of wealthy people, so that these die thereby.

g. Mutual help in the village.

476 Formerly people who were not poor also helped each other very much, when there was any need; and nowadays also good people help each other. They ask each other for fire, they give each other lime and tobacco to chew; kodalis and forks, axes and adzes, chisels [178] and mallets, ploughs and clod-crushers, pestles and wooden mortars, winnowing-fans and [426] baskets, and so on, they lend to each other. And if a man has no cart, or he has too few, the village people will without taking any pay let him have cart and bullocks for one day. But if any of the bullock-owner's people go along to drive the cart, the man who has asked for the loan will have to give rice and curry. And also when building a house, when ploughing, planting, making ricefield ridges, and harvesting they help each other, and those who ask for help have only to give rice and curry, and occasionally they also give them beer to make them glad. And in fever and illness they visit each other, they help each other to pass the night, and when there is any necessity, they also help each other fetching water and leaves, plastering the court-yard with cow-dung and pounding, and men who know to give medicine do this without any charge. They get food, and when

2; Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

the patients recover, they entertain the medicine givers. Since the time of the Santal rebellion they are not helping each other so much. However much they may have, some people are so stingy, they will absolutely not give anything, they utterly refuse to help. But no one likes such heartless people, and if they themselves fall into difficulties, no one will look at them; they rather say: Thakur is punishing this man in retribution. 476 [178]

Paddy and rice, salt and oil, money they also lend each other without any interest, but not for a long time. If they take this for a long time, we call it a debt, and in this case interest has to be paid. For paddy to be used as food 50 pct. interest, for paddy for seed 100 pct. interest, and for money 25 pct. interest has to be paid. 426

h. Working in company with others.

The Santals, men and women, very much like to work in company with others. When men go to the forest or to some hill to cut wood for a plough, a plough-beam, a yoke, rafters, firewood, posts, roof-beams, cross-beams, and so on, then they go in company. To enter a forest alone is very dangerous, and when you have companions, the work is not so strenuous. Also when going to the landlord or to a money-lender, they help each other, and at harvest time they make their threshing-floors together at the same place, in order that they may not be alone at night, and the work also goes easily in this way. Cattle-herd boys mostly herd in company, three or four of them together; by turns they drive the cattle round about, and when there is any danger, they help each other. The women also, when they go to draw water, or go to pluck vegetables and bring leaves, or when they go to a market or a shop to sell or buy, then they go in company with others. 476

i. Looking people up for a talk.

When they have no work the village people go and look each other up a good deal. The men go about on the pretext of asking for lime and tobacco; they chew the tobacco, and also talk together about their health and circumstances and so on. In the evening they come together at the Manjhi than; they start some humorous conversation, they jest together and talk together without restraint about a thousand matters, to ease their mind. The women also visit each other on the pretext of asking for fire or something; but they mostly have their deliberations at the place where they draw water. There they tell each other their troubles and joys and anything happening in the village. But some women do not, like the men, talk what is blameless; their words may be aggravating, and therefore very noisy quarrels sometimes arise. 521 574 [578]

j. Concerning relationship.

The Santals have really two kinds of relationship, relationship by birth and relationship brought about by marriage. But besides these two kinds the Santals arrange village relationship without there being any real relationship. Some people arrange a relationship in 602

h. Concerning mutual behaviour and respect.

At the time when we were boys, all members of a family living in the same village greeted each other in the morning, as soon as they got up, and the people in the village also greeted each other when they met, and when members of a family go anywhere on a visit or come back, then also they greet each other. And when the young people of a village go to attend a festival, they bow to the Mañjhi haṛam and Mañjhi buḍhi (the village headman and his wife), when they leave. In the house the master and his wife once daily are sure to kiss their sons and daughters-in-law, big or small. The young men and girls all honour the old men and ladies much. What these say to instruct or exhort them, this they fix in their mind. They are not impudent towards old men and women; in their presence they do not sit down on a bedstead even; young men and girls do not drink beer or liquor; the young men do not go to a place where an ox is eaten either. Women pay much heed to what the men say; they do not let their hair down in the presence of men. The village people honour the village headman and his deputy much, and these two also do not neglect what the village people say. 576 [622] [593] [561]

Nowadays the age has been spoilt. The women do not honour the men; the sons do not respect their old fathers either; daughters are also very impudent towards their mothers; they do not greet each other either; they pass each other like animals; the young men and girls drink an awful amount of beer; when old men come, they do not get up either; when old men or the parents upbraid them, the young men and girls answer back, or they run away in the sulks, and only when coaxed a good deal, will they come back home. The women and the children have become the kings in this age. Some few people are good even at the present time, but most people have become bad. The village headmen also judge covetously (taking bribes), and the village people do not follow the headman's order either. Also co-parents-in-law are quarrelling a good deal in the present age; formerly they never quarrelled, they were very respectful towards each other. The ancestors said: "Rice like flowers, curry like fish, liquor like fire, and a friend like a co-parent-in-law, where will you find such a one?" 178 576 [593] [561] [622] [539]

i. Concerning friendship.

Living in the same village all are relatives, quite so; but there is not friendship with all there. In a village many people are on friendly terms with each other, and some people also are on good terms with each other, but friendship they have only with one or two others, and intimate friendship they have only one with one other, and this is very rarely found. Intimate friends will give even their life to help each other in calamity and danger. People who are intimate friends tell each other the sorrows and joys of their heart, and in all matters they help each other, when there is any necessity. In the village elderly men 572

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

572 also become intimate friends, and also elderly women; but the time for becoming intimate friends is really when men and women are young.

Cattle-herd boys become great comrades, and mostly at this time intimate friendship between them is established. Those among the comrades whose hearts are especially bound together, become intimate friends; they stay together, they blow the flute, they kill birds, hares, and peafowls; they sing, they drive the cattle about by turns, and they help each other when there is any danger. They eat rice from the same leaf-plate, and when they kill birds or anything they divide and eat them. When they kill a hare, they give the killer the hind half. Persons who have become intimate friends in their boyhood, do not forget each other even when they have grown old, they remain friends all life long. When they, after having lost sight of each other, meet again long afterwards, they become very glad; they kiss each other.

Girls also become intimate friends in the same way, and it lasts all life long with them. Instead of the fellowship of the boys girls become what is called karam-branch friends. If the hearts of two girls have been bound fast together, they will at a karam festival[9] take two leaves of a branch and put these upon each other's head and thereupon salute all the people there. Afterwards they give the village people beer and food. These two do not address each other using their names, but address each other saying "karam branch". Young men and girls do not become intimate friends, except in connexion with marriage.

[178] Nowadays the intimacy of former days is being lost; the mind of the people is going to the bad. People mostly look out for their own happiness, let other people have whatever may happen.

m. Sticking together of the village people.

621 628 The Santals consider it an honour when their village is honoured, and they feel it a dishonour when their village is dishonoured; therefore if some one in their village gets into a quarrel with people of another village, then the whole village stands up for him. And if they hear any disgraceful statement concerning their own village, they apply to the headman of their village; thereupon they all, the village headman included, seize such people and say to them: Prove to us what you have spoken about us; otherwise we are not letting you off. If they are unable to substantiate it, they fine them very heavily. If any village has become famed, then the people of this village, when meeting with the people of the country in connexion with any matter, feel themselves high like hills; they take pride in the reputation of their village, even when they themselves are fools.

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[137] [9] The karam is a large forest tree, Adina cordifolia H. f. & B. The karam festivals will be described later on.

2: Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

f. About harbouring suspicion.

178 577 Formerly we had it very strict orderly, and the Santals also had a healthy fear of what is right; therefore men did not look at another man's wife. If they seduced the wife of another man, the woman's husband would cut them down; therefore there was no need of being suspicious. But nowadays there is no strict order; to cut people down they have also given up, and the Santals are also becoming very licentious; therefore people have no feeling of security; men and women suspect each other; there is no happiness at home. Nowadays they are also suspicious without cause, mostly so the women. As soon as a man looks at a girl or a married woman, his wife will at once accuse him; in this way much quarrel arises, and on account of this they also beat each other a good deal. Worried by the woman good husbands have also, in anger, got themselves co-wives.

g. About envy, and malice.

From olden times the Santals have been envying each other; but nowadays it is becoming more common. Men do not harbour much envy; mostly when in their youth some girl, being unwilling to agree to them, is married to some other young man, then they feel envy. Women are awfully envious. When they see others better off than themselves, they envy those; they feel envy towards those whom they suspect. They are envious towards those who look nicer than themselves; against men who will not marry them, they feel malice, and because of this malice they learn witchcraft and "eat" them, or if they do not "eat" them, they will "eat" the girl whom they are going to marry, and the envy of the wives of brothers destroys and maimes like leprosy. Half of the mutual complaints and fining that we have, have their origin in envy and malice, because the women do not only feel envy; they "eat", and they also set their husbands and relatives aflame by their talk; and the whole village is reduced to ashes.

i. About hating and taking revenge.

152 Santals do not much harbour hate; rather they get angry and furious; such anger will not, however, last a long time.

People who hate do not let their inner anger show; rather they speak sweetly to you; still they will not leave you, until they have done for you. Women especially harbour hate; like the fire in a warming-pan their mind is burning smouldering; and only when they get revenge, then only their mind cools down. Like snakes they bite when it is dark; you will never know anything, until the poison has taken effect in you.

u. About buying and selling.

178 433 436 262 In a former age there was no money, it is told, neither was there any buying and selling. All necessaries they were earning or making. For cooked food they had the millets iṛi, gundli, layo, erba, and janha, further maize, bajra, and paddy, and for curry the

beans hoṛad, raher, ghaṅgra, sutri; further alpalua, vegetables, fowls, pigs, goats, 178
hares, peafowls, the Indian Gaur, the Sambar Stag, birds, and the winged creation. And 433
salt they were preparing from saline earth. They scrape off and bring some earth, mix
it up in an earthenware pot and strain it with water; they boil the water, and when the [262]
water evaporates, the salt comes there. Because it is very pungent, they cover it up in [263]
a cloth and bury it in hot ashes; then it becomes tasty salt. They were preparing this
during the cold season. Oil they were pressing out of different forest fruits; they were
weaving clothes for themselves. People of the Ṭuḍu sept were making all kinds of im- [184]
plements of iron; and they were themselves making winnowing-fans and baskets, earthen-
ware vessels, and so on. Whether we formerly had gold or not, we do not know; but in
the old country they called gold samanom. Later on people of the Basko sept were trans- 178
acting business, buying and selling by barter, and since rupees and pice have appeared,
we buy and sell using money. Formerly also the village people were bartering, some 497
bartered buffaloes for goats, some goats for pigs, and so on.

Nowadays people of both sexes have become very lazy; they do not press oil, neither [184]
do they prepare salt; they do not much weave cloth either; they buy everything; thereby [426]
we Santals are becoming poor, and we are becoming deeply involved in debt to
the money-lenders.

v. About debts and loans.

In former times no people were getting into debt or taking loans from the money- 178
lenders; and there were no money-lenders either. In the Sikhar country the money-
lenders found us for the first time. There the first money-lender with the Santals lived 426
in Nanduara. From that time up to now we are in their hands, and they are tearing us
up like vultures. By constantly paying we become numb; still the debt never comes to
an end. They say: "If a seer has come into the house, it will never get out again"; [539]
"a Deko usurer, an old hyena, even old bones they crunch". Really it was also due to
hardship in connexion with those that we ran away from Sikhar. At first they did not
unrighteously charge us interest to such a degree; they were taking only 25 pct., in paddy
or money; but gradually they commenced to charge exorbitantly. For a debt of three or
four rupees they would without justice or reason drive pair after pair of plough-cattle away,
and if you remonstrated with them, they would at once commence to strike.

But there is fault also on our side. Foolishly the Santals run into the hands of the
usurers; whether they will be able to pay back or not, this they do not think of, and
when they have what is needed to pay with, they will not pay at once; consequently
interest upon interest is heaped up; thereupon the money-lender comes and carries all and
everything away. And in the present age many Santals also deceitfully cheat the usurers
and money-lenders of what is their right.

Zi Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

hunt. The rice-planting songs they sing when planting rice in the rice-fields, without dancing; the folk-tale songs they sing sitting down during the hot season in the evening; and the forest songs young men and girls sing in the forest, and also during the Sohrae, metaphorically. Dirges they sing at the final funeral ceremonies; these they also call "crying songs".

Except in the sword dance, the lagṛiṇ, and ḍahar (road) dances girls and young men dance together in all dances. When dancing the girls take hold of each other's hands, and the young men dance in front of and opposite to the girls, without taking hold of each other. Some young men will dance themselves alone while drumming the kettle-drum; some young men will, while drumming the dancing-drum, dance together with those who drum the kettle-drum; some young men blow the flute and dance at the same time, and some young men only dance, and they sing together with the girls. Young men and girls enjoy dancing very much; they dance the whole night, and during day-time they work; still because of their joy they do not feel tired. The old men and women do not warn the young people not to dance, rather they go to look at them, and when they feel drowsy and go home, they say to the young people, as they leave: Do stop now, otherwise you will be drowsy when you have to work to-morrow. The young people answer them: Well, we are stopping presently. Still they continue dancing, until they are done for. While they are dancing the Jog Māṇjhi does not stay there either, the young people are there alone right up to the end. Having danced until cock-crow they lie down just a little.

Elderly men and women do not dance the lagṛi much, only now and then for a short while; but during the Chaṭiar, the Flower and the Karam festivals they dance. Any one who knows the jhika, starts this, and they dance slowly and sing.

b. Beer drinking.

The real joy of old men is in the beer. When they have drunk themselves jolly tipsy, they start a thousand things, about the old country, about landlords and usurers, about dancing, singing and whatever it may be; then they laugh, they are rejoicing, they feel exceedingly well. If they become drunk, they lie down and sleep, and there is an end of their joy. Elderly women also drink a good deal. Formerly elderly women did not drink much, and young men and girls not at all. Nowadays all Santals drink very much, a great shame. Formerly no one drank from a brass-cup; they used leaf-cups; nowadays they pour brass-cup after brass-cup down; still they are not satisfied. Formerly they did not drink Suṇḍi[1] beer, only now and then they would drink liquor. Nowadays many Santals are becoming paupers by drinking Suṇḍi beer. If they have no money they take paddy

[1] Low-caste Hindus, who brew beer, distill liquor, and sell it.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

178 or rice along with them, so that there is no food at home; in spite of this when they come home and no food has been prepared for them, they scold their wives a good deal and even beat them. The poor wife, where is she to get anything with which to prepare food? [426] If they have no paddy or rice, they will drink, making debts. Then in the month of Magh (middle of January to middle of February) the Suṇḍi comes, harasses and threatens them, and carts their paddy bundles away. The wife and children of such a man pass their time in much suffering, as regards food and clothes. From the forest they bring vegetables and different kinds of tubers, cook and eat these. Formerly they were drinking four, or six, or if it became very much, eight leaf-cups; in this way their strength was not diminished; they were very strong and vigorous like youths. Nowadays, by constantly drinking and by marrying before they are fullgrown, they are becoming puny and stunted in growth; by behaving in such a way, — how should they retain their strength?

c. Stories and folk-tales.

538 By fairy-stories, folk-tales, and conundrums the Santals feel much enjoyment. In the evening the old men teach them this. The sons and daughters-in-law are occupied in the evening cooking rice and curry, making leaf-cups and leaf-plates, and the old people, husband and wife, tell the children fairy-stories and folk-tales and ask them riddles, to make them happy. If anyone knows a number of fairy-stories and folk-tales, the young people of the village will also gather at his place. And at the threshing-floors, when it is cold and they lie in the huts there, the young men learn much of this. Some people know so many; they tell the others folk-tales the whole night until dawn, still they are not finished, and those who listen do not get tired either; at such times they have no thought at all of dancing; listening they are utterly charmed by joy[3].

Girls and boys mostly learn riddles, and all day long they ask each other such. The young men learn more fairy-stories and folk-tales; even if girls learn the same, they will only get enough courage to let this be known in the presence of people when they have reached the age of old women. The folk-tales are especially about jackals; the fairy-stories are about kings and landlords and about different kinds of people, and the riddles are about a thousand different matters. When they start a riddle, they say: "A riddle, kite, kite", thereupon they give out the riddle[4].

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113 [114] [3] The Santals have a very large number of folk-tales and stories. The present writer has collected several hundreds. Ten such tales have been published in the Publications of the Indian Institute of the Royal Frederik University, Kristiania 1924, and 60 other tales by Institutet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning (Santal Folk Tales, vol. I to III, Oslo 1925, 1927, and 1929). A few have also been published in a similar way by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta. The manuscript of several hundreds, all written down for me by Santal men and women, is now in the University Library, Oslo. [4] See P. O. Bodding, Santal Riddles. Witchcraft among the Santals. Oslo Etnografiske Museums Skrifter, vol. 3, fasc. 3. Oslo 1943.

2; Skrefsrud M-9 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

f. Hunting.

224 The great joy of us men is the hunt. From olden times we have continually been hunting, and in however great a danger we may fall, still we do not give up hunting. And if a person will not go, we despise such people and call them women. Our ancestors have fought tigers and bears with great courage; sometimes the tigers and bears have gained the upper hand, and sometimes the men, and so it is going on until the present day.

178 203 224 793 796 In former times they used to announce the hunt by sending a branch from village to village, by stages, but since our stay in Sikhar we notify the day at the Pata (the hook-swinging festival)[6]. As there is a village priest and a priest of the outskirts in the village, there is similarly a dihri (hunt-priest) for the hunt. There is one hunt-priest for every single country. He carries the branch round at the Pata; the people of the country then ask him: In connexion with what is your branch, Sir? He then tells them the name of the forest: In such and such a forest, on such and such a day, at such and such a place we shall meet. He also tells them where they will spend the night. When we come home, we men in the village tell each other the news, saying: At such and such a date they are

224 to hunt through such and such a forest or over such and such a hill. The men of the village then get their different hunting implements together, they string their bows, fix the iron arrow-heads and the blunt arrow-heads in the arrows, they grind the iron arrow-heads and make them sharp-pointed, they grind their battle-axes sharp and give them a handle; they put the spear-heads on the shafts, and the swords they polish bright. They tell the women to prepare dough-balls of Mahua for food, and they make them pound rice to have to take along with them. The village headman has to give five half-seers of rice and one small bundle of Mahua as hunt-bounty. This the hunting men eat, or if some

[782] poor men have nothing, they let them have a sufficiency of this. The village priest sacrifices five fowls for the sake of the hunt.

[534] When the fixed day is reached, a couple of men go at cock-crow in advance out to an open plain to bring the whole male village population together there; they also take kettle-drums and flutes and horns along with them; and until the village men have all come out, they beat the kettle-drums rat-a-tat, blow the flute harmoniously, and blow the horns tootingly, and they sing any amount of forest songs sweetly. When they have all assembled, they shout with one voice together; thereupon they go to the place where they are to meet. Here they eat their noon meal. One after the other the people of the country come and assemble there; the hunt-priest has been there from cock-crow.

224 787 Until the people of the country arrive, the hunt-priest makes a divination about good or bad happenings. If he gets anything bad in any direction, he calls the country people

[6] The Pata should be held on the last day of Cet, about the 15th of April; among the people living in the Santal Parganas it may be held any day during Baisak (middle of April to middle of May). The dihri has a rat-branch with as many leaves on there are days remaining before the hunt is to take place.

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

villages have passed an unrighteous judgement in connexion with some riceland, or in connexion with a bride and bridegroom; or: Me they have without any cause called a witch[8]; or: I have on account of this or that in the meantime forbidden so and so people to fetch water and touch the drinking vessels; or: As for me, the village people have without any cause or reason shut my door, — they make a thousand complaints, because the hunt-council is our High Court. There the Pargana, Dge Mañjhi, and village headmen have no power to intimidate any one, the men of the country, small and big, judge, and there they utterly subdue the greedy, fat people, if they have in any case acted unjustly. Some greedy people do not go there at all out of shame or fear. If they have not gone there, the men of the country will next day seize them, and if they do not obey, the men of the country will next day go in crowds to their home, and if they find proofs of their injustice, they punish them so as to make them flinch. At the hunt judging they judge very righteously; they do not let any injustice pass at all. In the village the headman or the Pargana scold and intimidate us, as they take us to be of no account; but at the burnt forest they have no power to silence us; then they become slinking like the tail of a cowardly dog; for this reason we poor people have great trust in the judgement of the burnt forest[9].

Continuing to judge, dancing the duñger, singing forest songs, and blowing the flute they continue until dawn. They then prepare their morning meal and eat; thereupon the hunt-priest sacrifices the remaining fowls. Now they enter the other forest and turn back hunting. When, at noon or in the middle of the afternoon, they have finished hunting they disperse. Thereupon they start for their various villages, hunting as they pass along.

Formerly they were hunting up to five days, being continually out so long; but nowadays, what can be done, when there is no such big forest? Formerly when the hunters entered and passed through the street of any village, the girls of the village washed their feet, and the hunters gave these girls campa flowers[10], and they saluted each other. Thereupon the village people gave the hunters Mahua dough and water to eat and drink. Nowadays this custom of ours has been discontinued.

When the hunters come home, the respective household people wash their feet, and they salute each other, because they have come back saved from death; as they say among us: The danger for women is at childbirth; the danger for men is during hunt and chase; if you get through this, you will see ages. When they have washed their feet, they give them food. They eat; thereupon the hunters go to where there is water; here they gather, and when they have come together, they singe and cut up the killed animals. The one

[8] i. e., his wife or a daughter or a related woman living in his house; a man is not a witch. [9] The hunt-council is constantly referred to as "the burnt forest". Every year the Santals in the beginning of April set fire to the undergrowth and especially all the dead leaves lying on the ground. [10] Either a small bush, Ochna squarrosa, Roxb., or a large tree, Michelia champaca, L.

VIII. CRIME AND ITS PUNISHMENT

a. The councils.

623 We have three kinds of councils: The village, or headman's council, the outside, or over-
634 chief council, and the hunt, or the council of the people of the country. In the village council the village headman is the president; in the outside-council the Pargana is the president, and in the hunt council the hunt-priest is the president. In the headman's council the 'five men' of the village[1] assist the headman in judging. In the Pargana's council the village headmen under the Pargana and the village people of the neighbourhood assist him in judging. In the hunt-council the people of the whole country assist the hunt-priest in judging. The headman is above the village; the Pargana is above a number of villages. There is nothing fixed; they have not the same number of villages, some have many, others have only a small number under them. We have Dęs Mąńjhis, these are the assistants of the Parganas. From a village headman's judgement they may appeal to the Pargana, and from the Pargana's judgement they may appeal to the people of the country in the burnt forest. From the judgement of the people of the country there is no appeal.

634 The customary perquisites of a Pargana are as follows: From every single village under him he is to get year by year one rupee, half-a-seer clarified butter, and eighty cobs of Indian corn. The Dęs Mąńjhi gets eight annas, a quarter seer clarified butter, and forty cobs of Indian corn every year in the same villages. When the village headmen under the Pargana pay in to him his perquisites, he gives them a feast, and the Dęs Mąńjhi also
177 does the same. Nowadays some village headmen do not give the Pargana the rupee, neither
178 does the Pargana give any feast to the village headmen who pay: they let all pass into
622 desuetude, since the Europeans have appeared in the Santal country. Since these have
634 appeared, the Parganas and the village headmen have become utterly greedy; anyone who
661 is able to give them most money, in his favour they judge, and people of this kind they help in the public courts, and poor people who have no money, they do not take any notice of; without cause or reason they scold and browbeat them and cause their suit to be dismissed.

177 The people of the country are not nice either. They do not inform the village headman,
178 neither do they complain to the Pargana, and to the people of the country they do not
691

[1] See Dictionary s. v. mōrē hor.

appeal either. Also a quarrel between husband and wife these wretched fools at once bring 177
in before the European magistrates, a crying shame; the deceitful Indian pleaders cheat 178
them of their money a good deal; they get one another into prison; their mutual hatred
remains with them smouldering like hot-pan fire; this is what they have gained by trans- 691
gressing the customary judgements of the ancestors. Let them take the great crimes to the courts; but what we have from olden times disposed of ourselves, why do they take heaps of such matter to the courts?

b. Concerning witnesses.

From ancient times up to near the present day we Santals did not know false statements; we were stating what we had seen with our eyes, both about enemies and about 177
our brothers and sisters. After the Europeans have come, a few Santals have been judged 178
to be hanged, because they have spoken the truth. There were no witnesses of their crime; 695
if they had lied and denied it, they would have been set free. In our councils we did not bring the witnesses in one by one; we put all the witnesses forward at once; still they did not tell falsehoods. Nowadays they have learnt deceit from the Dekos, and like them they sell their soul and honour for one brass-cup of beer; and as the magistrates do not know our language, they cannot distinguish falsehood from truth; they are only led astray by the words of the deceitful Indians; therefore we do not get just judgements. We would have any fear of the light swearing in the courts? Let them make them swear like the oaths of our ancestors, then they would tremble, fearing for their life, and they would surely not speak falsely. A few magistrates have let a very short oath in our language be made up by some Dekos; but we only laugh at this oath, because what is said aims at the one who administers the oath. They make them swear like this: "Speak the truth; if I speak what is false a tiger spirit will eat thee". The witness repeats this, following him: "Speak the truth; if I speak what is false, a tiger-spirit will eat thee". Why should witnesses have any fear from this?

c. The different kinds of crime. 682

Among the great crimes are the following: To kidnap children, to sacrifice them, to kill 684
a person by carelessness, to rob one of his wife, to rape a woman, forcibly to apply sindur
to a woman. Our punishment for this was death. The kidnappers steal children, or catch 682
a person on the road, and sacrifice them. If they were caught at the moment, they killed them without any judging, and there was no appeal in this case. When some one inadvertently shot and killed somebody during the hunt, the people passed judgement and let the person be killed in return. At such a time they let the man who shot and killed the other, stand where the man was who was shot and killed, and where the man who shot and killed was, there they let a relative of the shot and killed man stand. If he shoots

17 Oslo Etn. Mus. — Budding.

2; Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

682 and kills the man who shot and killed from there with one arrow, well and good; otherwise he is set free. And if a man is killed by an arrow passing through an animal, then, in the same way, they let some animal stand, and let the man who shot and killed stand behind the animal, so far away from the animal as the killed one was. If shooting through the animal placed there he kills him, well and good; otherwise he is free.

178 684 A man who has been robbed of his wife may, without any judgement, kill both on the spot, anywhere he may track and find the two, like a deer in the forest. His relatives will help him tracking them, but he himself will do the killing. Nowadays they do not kill them; but the seducer will have to pay five rupees to save his head.

Those who raped women they also treated in the same way. Also these have nowadays to pay five rupees to save their head, and besides this they fine them as heavily as they can. Mostly they make them pay a score of rupees. They cut off the right hand of a man who forcibly had applied sindur to a woman, and with a spindle they poked out one of his eyes. And there was a seperate fine. Nowadays these also have to pay five rupees to save hand and eye; they get a beating and also have to pay a fine. We had no murder without a cause.

178 683 As to witches, formerly we drove them away after having treated them disgracefully; only now and then have we killed them. Also nowadays they drive them away, and sometimes they also kill them.

But this is not right, because the ancestors of old did not act in this way. If they were accidentally killed when they were beating them in anger, the ancestors of old did not call this murder; therefore they did not punish those who beat them to death.

178 684 Our punishment for illicit intercourse between relatives and with a person of another race was outcasting, and so it is now also. Nowadays this is also slackening off with us; some persons quite confidently act in this way; the people do not do them anything.

177 178 685 Formerly the Santals did not steal; but nowadays they have learnt this also from the Dekos. From former times only one kind of theft is remembered, viz., to steal and eat sheep or goats. When such animals had gone astray anywhere, then the whole village population would kill and eat them when they found them, and the village headman they would give a double share. If this was proved, they would then restore the head (give a fresh animal instead), and would fine them five four-anna bits each. Nowadays they take all to the smooth verandah (i. e., the courts).

178 682 Abortus provocatus we have had from old times. They were doing this when birth would be improper (on social indications). If it is proved, we fine both the medicine giver and the treated one ten rupees each. Nowadays we take such crimes to the courts. If they defame anybody without cause, they will have to pay five rupees to wipe off the defamation and five four-anna bits to the village council. The crime of sodomy is the act of drunk men only. Formerly we gave such men an awful thrashing and fined them ten

178 684

2; Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

rupees. Nowadays who can say whether they take them to the courts or not? Besides this we have a couple of shameful sins that are not publicly mentioned. 178 684

When anyone has caused any loss, we make them pay the price or the estimated damage, and we also fine them. We fine both who strike each other, when both are guilty, otherwise one of them. If bullocks or cows butt and kill each other, we take the one who caused the death; and if anyone kills a bullock by ploughing or beating it, we make him pay its price. Anyone who falsely complains or makes a claim, him we punish contrarily. Those who without cause backbite people, we fine heavily. 685

A girl who commits the fault of mounting a tree in the sacred grove, or of entering the sacred closet in a man's house, will have to give a sacrifice animal. 688

When there is a dispute in connexion with the boundaries, the Pargana and the village headmen of the neighbourhood come together and settle the matter; and when there is a dispute in connexion with riceland, the village headman and the village council settle the matter. They fine the guilty person. These two kinds of mutual robbing have spread over the whole country through the instigation of the Dekos; otherwise formerly we had no such quarrels. Nowadays the Dekos also rob us of our villages; they both encroach on our boundaries and steal our riceland. People say: The Dekos enter like a needle, and they swell to be as large as a plough-share. They are also making us rob each other and quarrel. Where they are, there is no peace. Causing false evidence to be given in the courts, they rob us of all we have; and the magistrates do not understand our language; therefore we shall probably some day in the future again have to run away somewhere. If Deko cats were not living among Santals, it would be good for us Santals. 177 178 685 829

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

IX. RELIGION AND WORSHIP

a. Ṭhąkur.

776 In the primeval age we had no bongas[1]. During our wanderings we have got them. The Siń boṅga (Sun or Day spirit) we also got on our way in Siń duṣr (the Sun or Day pass). The primeval ancestors were worshipping only Ṭhąkur. Having got the bongas we have gradually forgotten Ṭhąkur; only the name is left. The people of the [178] present age have mostly forgotten also the name; only we who have learnt the story of the ancestors and a few old men are remembering his name. In the present age the Santals say the Siń boṅga is presumably Ṭhąkur; therefore, when worshipping, they look towards the sun and call this their Ṭhąkur; but our ancestors of old have handed over to us, viz., to us gurus, that Ṭhąkur is different; he is not seen by human eyes; but he himself sees all. He himself has created earth and heaven, the human beings, the animals, the birds and winged beings, the insects, the snakes and reptiles, the fishes and crabs, the trees and plants, the paddy and rice, the baȷṛa and Indian corn, all and everything, and he supports all, small and big, he feeds us all. He is the one who brings us here, he is the one who takes us away. By the word of the bongas and the mountain spirits or of a human being we are not born, nor do we go away; Ṭhąkur has measured out to us our seer, and until this is finished, no one is able to take us away. As we are living here, in the same way we shall, when we have gone to the other world, get good or bad by his order.

973 The Sun bonga we call a good bonga: he brings the dawn, he brings the evening; he gives us warm sunshine, he gives us rain; therefore at the time of religious observances we appeal to him. He is the man, and the moon is his wife, and the stars are their children. The ancestors have told, it is reported, that these two, husband and wife, had very many children. The sons stayed with their father, and the daughters with their mother. Due to the heat of the sun and the day-stars it was felt like being burnt on the earth. The moon then said to the sun: We shall eat our children; otherwise humanity will be destroyed. The husband then said: Do you eat your daughters first; if the human beings do not get any relief thereby, I shall eat mine also.

[1] See Dictionary s. v.

2; Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

754 turns out to be otherwise at seven such people, I shall return you your fee money. Now they go home. If it has been shown to be a bonga, the patient will promise him a sacrifice; and if it has been shown to be witches, they harrass and fine these, and they drive them ignominiously away from the village. If the people who have been pronounced to be witches at one witchfinder's are not satisfied, they take them to another witchfinder, to get fresh proof. But this is futile, because if they have been pronounced to be witches in one place, even if they go to a thousand witchfinders, they will all say the same. Only a very few witches are able by magic to muddle up a witchfinder's prophecy. If the wife of a village headman is caught as a witch, they will not be able to drive her away; she will on the contrary herself say to the person who has been eaten: Do look out for yourself, if you are not feeling comfortable somewhere; I have got a village, where shall I go?

• 178 754 Nowadays the witchfinders act very deceivingly; there is no trustworthiness in them as it was formerly, as with the honest witchfinders. Formerly the witchfinders did not learn to become witchfinders, it would come to them of its own accord. They were not filled by the spirit of divination; they got it at night through dreams, or they had visions in daytime. The bongas appeared and told them, viz.: Such and such people are coming for this or that purpose, you tell them in this way. Nowadays there are no such witchfinders; mostly they hypocritically blacken people and take their money. For this reason they keep secret informers, to remove hindrances. And witchfinders, who have no secret informers, make their prophecies, feeling their way. They try mentioning half a name, and keep their eyes on the persons who want to be informed, to see whether it is right or not, and if it is incorrect, they again try some other name. Therefore the words of the witchfinders do not agree nowadays. The witchfinders who keep secret informers are easily able to find all out; if such a witchfinder is unable to name it correctly, he says to them: Sirs, there is an occult hindrance; get this removed first. They then go to the secret informer. What different things have to be given to remove the occult hindrance, this the witchfinder has told them. The secret informer offers this, a fowl, or a grasshopper, or a frog, or some fungus, or a white cat. Before he performs the sacrifice, he asks them: In whose name am I to get the occult hindrance removed? Then they tell him the names of the village headman and of his deputy; they tell him the name of the complainant; and as they tell him a few other matters, he performs the sacrifice. Thereupon he says to them: If you have any doubt, watch me; I shall not go to the witchfinder. But to his own house he goes, and his wife can talk with the wife of the witchfinder; thereby much deceit may happen. Let the witchfinders at once openly tell all as in former times, in that case there is nothing to be said. But where do the present day witchfinders act in this way? The secret informers get one four-anna bit to remove the occult hindrance.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

a. To be possessed.

About being possessed I have already spoken: at the time when they make the bongas come up in the sacred grove, they cause men to be possessed, and at the Flower festival they become possessed of their own accord; but also at times of fever and illness they cause men to be possessed, in order to ask them and to be informed. When a bonga has inspired a man, he gets into a trance and is possessed, and the bonga speaks through his mouth. We ask the bongas at such time: Do please, my Lord, here filling the bed, overfilling the mat, we are lying, we are curled up, feeble, scantily clad, where it ran into seed and ripened, in what way it was half-done, was indifferently done, this one thing tell us, show us; where it started, had its origin, carefully using a split bamboo, a stretched out thread, make a way, make a road in connexion with this, Lord Father my Ṭhakur[7]. Then the possessed men tell that they are possessing bongas, saying: We have one day, half-a-day desired, have coveted, we have frightened, have alarmed, where should we lay the blame, the fault. Then they quickly make a sound that it is allright. The men then answer: Well then, now we have got to know, we have understood, we have had warning, have become conscious, please, at the Flower festival or at the Sohrae we shall give ye this portion; well then, this fever, this illness ye at once carry along, carry along in a sling, and medicine leaf-cups, large leaf-cups with medicine we shall apply, shall put on; may he get well, may he recover, that he may say from to-day: please give me rice, please give me food; may he eat, may he take food; have a care then, don't deceive us, let us see your trustworthiness. Then at this moment the bongas answer: Look then, so long a time, so long an age our (word) has not been false, not been falsified; for what purpose should we let it loose, set it free? like a stone, like a rock we have pressed it, we have pressed it down. Then when they have got confidence, the people say: Well, my Lords, it has become late and a long time, the horses, the umbrellas have become tired, please let it come to an end. Thereupon the possessed ones come to. 787

The ancestors have said that when those to be possessed are inspired, they become unconscious; they do not remember anything. But nowadays the possessed ones remember everything. Perhaps these also are like the deceitful witchfinders of the present day, probably they are. Also due to greediness they become possessed in the present age, that they may get excellent beer, under false pretences. One man[8] has told the following: When I get possessed, I remember everything, and I hear and follow clearly all their talk, and I have got for myself a good deal of excellent beer by false pretences. This man lives in Benagaria; all people know his name. He has told: If I do not get excellent beer at some festival, then I meditate in my mind how I shall get tasty beer. And I say: O, I shall 178 • 787

[7] No Santal has been able to tell the writer what the real meaning of the rigmarole is. [8] The man referred to was Biram, who later on became Skrefsrud's principal assistant in Santali. [115]

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

178 787 be possessed as Mañjhi haram. Thereupon I quickly become possessed, and they ask me: Who are you, Lord? Then I tell: Mañjhi haram. Then they take me to their house; at the door they wash my feet on a brass plate. Thereupon they take me inside and make me sit down on a stool. Then they bring me some very tasty poured out beer in a brass-cup. When I have drunk about two brass-cups, I come to. In many villages I have fraudulently obtained beer by becoming possessed in this way.

When they tie the bullocks to the posts in the street at the Sohrae and forget any customary act, I look intently at it, in order that when they ask me, after my having become possessed, I may be able to tell exactly why I, the Mañjhi haram, have come. Having become possessed I say to them: I have come because you have done wrong in connexion with this or that. Then they say to me: Well, my Lord, don't be offended; we did something wrong; please put up with it, endure it. Then they again give me one additional brass-cup full of beer.

f. Application of the (evil) eye.

754 Application of the eye is also a trouble that we have. The eye of women is applied because of envy. When they see that someone has earned well, they say: Nothing happens to so and so; they are earning exceedingly; they will surely have no trouble. This speech of theirs takes effect. Then these people become ill; their cattle die, and they get much
755 suffering. When they let divination be made in connexion with this the ojhas say: Envy and malevolence have been applied to you. Consequently they give fowls to the ojha, that he may make them well by sacrificing them. Therefore, however wise we Santals may be, or however much we may be able to work, we do not exert ourselves too much; we rather suffer hunger.

g. Of being bewitched.

754 We are also afraid of being bewitched. People say, it is told, if people whose tongue is spotted look at you when you are eating, you will vomit a good deal, afterwards you will get diarrhoea, and in case it is a child, they will also cry much. On such occasions we let persons who know how to do it, feel the pulse. They will then say: This one has been bewitched, get me some marking nut, one half of the pod of the fruit of jom lar[9], some charcoal and a straw of a worn broom. They bring him this, and keeping his breath he three times makes exorcizing passes over the bewitched person, and when he is performing this, he takes these things below and under his legs; thereupon he throws it all away on to the homestead field of some other person.

[9] Berbisia Vahill, W. & A.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

597 his, then the sons of the adopting man get this property or that of his wife. But the
428 cousins of the adopted man get nothing. That is to say, the sons of the adopting man will have the responsibility for the expenses with the final funeral ceremonies and so on. And if he has children, it naturally belongs to them. And when any married people have no children, they may take children of both sides, i. e., children of the wife's brothers, or children of her younger sister, children of the husband's younger or elder brothers, take them to themselves as adopted ones, to be supported by them until death. These adopted ones also, in the same way, get their share of the agricultural lands, if children of the adopting pair have been born. And if they have got no children, all property will naturally belong to the adopted son. Mostly such childless people take in sons as adopted ones.
• [178] Now and then they have taken in real adopted ones. When formerly — it is now some three scores of years ago — there was an insurrection, then they adopted many. At the present time they also now and then adopt. Nowadays, since the European missionaries
597 have come, these show mercy to orphans. Rather, these European teachers are like claimants
797 following up and finding their rice-lands and other lands. This is a righteous act much greater than everything else they do. They are teaching them knowledge at their own expense. They do not seek to be supported until death like us; they are rather themselves supporting others.

c. Wife's children taken in.

428 When a man takes a second wife, and she brings with her children, viz., of her former
587 husband, we call such children saŋgha lɔtɔm (taken in by wife's second marriage). If they are boys, these children have no right to get the stepfather's agricultural lands and so on. But the stepfather will with pleasure procure land and a homestead field for such a one from the village headman, giving money of his own household as salami. And when the remarried woman has any earnings of her own, these belong to the children she has brought with her. But for keeping it in safe custody, she will give the uterine brothers a portion; otherwise they have no right to it.

d. Taking possession on settling.

421 If any one after having done some planting of trees runs away, and the headman of that village settles a man who has come running there, in the run-away man's agricultural land and homestead field, then if there are Mahua trees or water-reservoirs, etc., in that homestead field or in the village street outside the house or in the unit of land, the new settler gets all, including these. Even if there are heirs of the run-away man in this village, they cannot lay claim to the things mentioned, because the new man has taken possession on settling. And even if the run-away man should sometime return to this village, he will not get these trees or water-reservoirs, etc., even if he lays claim to them at the landlord's door, because that man has taken possession on settling.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

shall see in detail later, the stringency of these ancient customs has slackened considerably as some of the totems are names of essential articles of food, and the branching off into numerous sub-clans has made the position easier to avoid the penalty and the stigma of a marriage within the clan.

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Clans and sub-clans

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We shall now examine the clans (called *padit* in Mayurbhanj) in detail on the basis of our investigations in Mayurbhanj and enumerate the sub-clans as traced there. Almost all the authorities follow the Santal traditions in giving the priority to the "Hansdak'." The reason is not very clear. Nowhere in the traditions do we come across any light as to why a superiority should be given to any clan ; rather the honour, if at all deserved, should go to the *Murmu*, also called *Murmu* Thàkur, whose presence in a Santal feast is construed to be the compliment paid to the purity of the clan maintained by the host. But, curiously enough, the order of ethnological precedence goes to the "Hansdak'." Man, in his *Sonthalia and the Sonthals*, reasons that the largest and the most powerful tribe took the name "Hansdak'." We have heard an educated "Hansdak'" maintaining that this is the first and the best 'caste' with a Brahmanical pride in his speech, because he read so in the books of the Mis-

3t Mukherjea O. Y. 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

614 (vi) Campa or Campa baha Murmu:—Campa flowers are taboo to them.

(vii) Obòr Murmu (*Obòr*, to lie down).

(viii) Khedwar Murmu (*Khed*, to drive away). It was reported that "Nil gae" (murum) is no longer taboo to them.

614 784 (ix) Sona Murmu (*Sona*, gold) or Sona Murmu Copeyar or Copeyar Murmu:—The members of this sub-clan, called variously as noted above, neither wear gold ornaments nor use *tasar* clothes. They are also prohibited from taking umbrellas inside their houses, nor do their women wear white shell-bangles (called in Santali, *Saṅkha*).

614 We closely questioned the Santals on the point of inter-marriage between the various sub-clans. The general answer was that all these sub-clans may marry into the others, according to modern usage, but previously there were many bars. One such instance came to our attention when we asked the Santals about inter-marriage between the Ṭikà and Campa sub-clans. Some told us that they have no such practice while others were equally emphatic about its existence. At last the Gordian knot was [178] cut by S.I. Ananta Mañjhi of Udla, when he said that such prohibition existed in the past, but it is now slack, so such marriages now take place. This explanation was agreed to by a Desh Prodhan, one of the leading Santals.

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

614 the Santals can never marry into any family that bears the name of the clan. But the common-folk opined that marriages may take place if the sub-clans are different, the parent clan remaining the same. But it was apparent that Santals do not like unions within the clan, although the sub-clans of the contracting parties may be altogether different. One thing was clear. The orthodox [178] custom of limiting marriage outside the clan is no longer in strict existence, and marriage between the members of different sub-clans of one parent-clan, is being tolerated.

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

Supreme Court of the Santals

224 634 692 [796] According to immemorial custom, the Santals join together in an annual hunt (*Lò bir sendra*) on the conclusion of the spring flower-festival, when opportunity is taken to discuss various questions affecting the social and religious problems of the tribe, and to decide the reference cases from the decisions of the *Desh-Pròdhans*.

Here grave social offences necessitating social excommunication and ostracism (*Bitlihà*), (as we shall see in detail very soon) constitute subjects of grave deliberation by the tribe. Such meetings are [211] convened by the circulation of a mysterious notice [184] by means of a knot tied to a rope as in Mayurbhanj, [202] or a branch of *Sal* tree carried from *hat* (market) to *hat* (as in Santal Parganas). About the constitution [114] of this privy-council, Dr. Campbell opines that a person, *Dihri* (the superintendent of the hunt), is also the president of the court which assembles in the evening, but all that our enquiries revealed in Mayurbhanj was that the Pargana, the Desh-Pròdhans of the tribe assisted by the elders called Desh-Panchayet, jointly deliberate together before declaring their verdict.

[184] [178] This ancient institution, called in Santal lore *Sendra bir bichar* (a trial during a hunt at a forest) is almost extinct in Mayurbhanj, as wild games are protected by the State and no question of a tribal hunt

3i Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

arises ; and those days are no more when it was a regular feature of Santal life with the mass dancing and drinking associated with its conclusion. So it is that the Santals of Mayurbhanj have got a second string to their bow, in the form of a parliament during *Sakrat baske*, (*Mòkòrbasi*, on the second of Magh) in case the hunting assembly may not be convened for want of sufficient attraction.

692
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[224]
[184]
[178]

Supreme council at Mòkòrbasi

This parliament of the *Desh-Pròdhans* is held at some halting place (*gadi* or *mukam*) towards the river Damodar to which the Santals journey to throw the bones of their dead relations in the holy river. Here it is that the people aggrieved by the decision of the *Desh-Pròdhans* appeal to the assembly of elders to reopen their cases and try them according to law. Frequently, these appeals are admitted and tried by the assembly of all the *Desh-Pròdhans* of the tribe in consultation with the elders. But here also only important questions relating to the payment of bride-price or restriction of conjugal rights form the subject-matter of the decisions of the supreme court.

[764]

Social taboos: Punishment for their breaches

While dealing with the village assembly and its powers and functions, we have observed that as

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3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

to be their nefarious instruments. "Don't believe women," they would say equally with those who thought our original mother was built of the left crooked rib of man. It is no wonder therefore that Santal customary law should be pervaded with the spirit of considering its women as mere chattels to be 'bought' for matrimony and progeny. 562

Thus theoretically at least the Santals think of their women as capricious and irresponsible creatures, a useful and indispensable necessity to the personal and tribal life but belonging to a sub-human species. So we find that what to say of rights of acquiring property, she has no civic rights in the tribe recognised for her. She cannot sit as a member in the deliberations of the village elders, although her evidence is admissible in those 'courts.'

Various factors contributed to this position. [174] But the most important seems to be the semi-hunting, perpetually migrating nature of the original Santal, who formed members of a seemingly communistic society, dividing the produce of their soil between themselves. So not being tenants in the legal sense of the term with real properties, the question of providing for children did not strike the Santal seriously, till he, in recent times, accepted the position of settled agriculturists.

Now a keen observer sees a change. Whatever [178] their old tribal ideas might have been, the women

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

562 are observed in practice to exercise a position in the
178 domestic life, which rightfully belongs to the house-
[177] wife in the western sense of the term. Moreover, education, contact with the liberalising tendencies of the west filtered through the Missionaries and of the *Dekos* (non-Santals), have to a large extent softened the rigidity of old tribal laws to more and more advanced ideals.

583 The pivot of the woman's existence, according to the Santal, depends on her marriage. But to marry her one must buy her with a price. This bride-price, *Gònòñ*, as the Santal calls it, is as essential in a Santal marriage as the *Saptapadi* is to the Hindu, or the eating together from the same plate to the Burmese. So the legal corollary is that the husband is the 'owner' of his wife as a parcel of property.

586 The courts present interesting cases of Santal
583 divorce when the settlement of the bride-price becomes the most important factor in the decree. Should the woman be proved the guilty party, the bride-price has got to be returned to the injured husband. If the woman is proved on evidence to be erring, and adultery is proved against her, the co-respondent must pay a double *Gònòñ* (bride-price) to the husband of the woman. But if the man is the offending party, his bride-price is forfeited.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

So as a chattel she belongs in her minority to her father, she is bought as such by her husband and when her coverture ceases on her husband's death, she reverts to her original owners. But if her father is dead and none of her original kinsmen kindly takes charge of her, she drifts as a piece of *res-nullius*, without any *locus standi* in the social life.

It is not strange, therefore, that having converted her into a piece of property, the tribal laws could not legally and logically bestow on her any rights to hold and own property, real or personal.

But as we have observed before, Santal tribal jurisprudence has changed and is still changing a great deal. In the domain of the ownership of personal properties, this improved position is the most perceptible. It is seen that now they can own money, cattle and goods. This ownership is completed legal right, for they have the power of disposing of these to whomsoever she pleases. She is not merely the trustee, as the Hindu widow is, with regard to her widow's estate.

It is frequently seen that when property is divided between the sons, a loving father will bestow on his daughter some heads of cattle or some pin-money, to be her personal property. Thus we find that the ornaments of the women are their own. They enjoy the fullest powers of disposal over them. But sometimes they are made to store family money.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

562 423 428 606 fically arranged at the time of marriage by a public declaration, which has all the force of an oral will.

As a matter of fact, it is the daughter who inherits. The *ghardi jan*wane is the representative as tenant and owner of the woman in the eye of tribal law, who has no rights of inheritance recognised for her. This position will be still more clear when we remember that if the *ghardi* janwane leaves his father-in-law's protection, his rights in his father-in-law's lands melt away for ever. And never has his own relatives any right to his so-called inheritance. The children of the marriage are the only beneficiaries. In case the *ghardi* janwane's wife [691] dies, the tribal customs generally allow him a life-interest only, provided he does not remarry. This legal fiction was created by Santal customary law to provide lands for daughters; because, as women, they cannot perform certain social and religious duties which only men can perform.

562 423 428 178 But times are changing. So we find in many cases the Settlement courts have recorded daughters as *raiyats* in agricultural lands, and provided them with a life-tenure; and reformist Santal associations are trying for the recognition of the rights of inheritance of married Santal girls.

736 671 423 422 But the lot of the widow in the Santal customary law is the hardest. She is not entitled to any land, although she may own personal property, either in her father's home or in her husband's.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

either in her father's home or in her husband's. It may be that children may look after their widowed mother out of kindness and gratitude, but she has no rights recognised for her. But if she has no children, the only alternative is again the kindness of the members of her husband's family. If they are hard-hearted, she is thrown adrift in this wide world.

There were, however, signs of Santal public opinion asserting itself to ameliorate the condition of the widows. A section of Santal educated opinion recently wanted that the widow should have her rights of maintenance out of her late husband's properties, till she remarried. But tribal laws are hard and conservatism is deep-rooted.[1]

The ultimate result of the reformist moves can be gleaned from the Santal Parganas Enquiry Committee Report published in 1938. The committee (page 49) while discussing "Transfer by gift or will" notices that "there has been for many years a slow trend towards a change in the law which would give (Santal) women a recognised position. But there is no unanimity among the Santals on the point. The committee examined a number of witnesses on the point, among others, the President of the Santal

1. With acknowledgments to Rev. P. O. Bodding.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Malko Sabha.[1] But even this body which represents more advanced opinion was not in favour of permitting a Santal to transfer by will anything except his self-acquired property; and the President admitted that this change would have little practical effect, since the laws against alienation practically limit the self-acquired property to such land as the raiyat has himself reclaimed."

Considering all these, the committee did not think a change ought to be enforced by legislation and hoped that the customary law would develop 'naturally and gradually.' Finally, they recommended that civil cases involving questions of Santal law of inheritance should, where possible, be referred to arbitration by Santal arbitrators to facilitate the growth of a convention.

Conclusion

We have already seen that the Santals have a well-knit social organization which moulds their thoughts, feelings and actions. So the sentiments produced in the mind of the tribe have a special stamp of their own. The actions inspired by these ideas have a similarity under social discipline and these, in their turn, crystallize into usages, and next,

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1. Hõṛ Malto Maraṅ sabha (?)

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

wing of the house serves the purpose. A midwife, a Santal woman of the profession, attends on the parturient woman with her elderly women-relatives. In cases of difficult delivery, *Ojhas* (exorcists) are summoned to perform rites so as to expel the ghosts, supposed to be creating difficulties.

When the child is born, the umbilical cord is severed by the midwife with a sharp iron weapon such as an arrow-blade. The baby is now bathed in tepid water and the navel-string buried near the main door of the room of its birth.

As regards ceremonial uncleanliness for the baby and its mother, the practice differs in different areas of Mayurbhanj. Some do not observe any segregation whatsoever; while others observe it for varying periods[1] from one to twenty-one days, during which they may not visit the room, touch the baby or its mother. The observance of this birth-pollution in some areas and its negation in others, throws a flood of light on the influence of others on their customs and manners. During her confinement, the mother is allowed to eat warm rice with salt, leaves of

1. On this point, Nabin Mañjhi, an old Santal said that custom requires that twelve days should be observed. But it has slackened and men now sometimes consider themselves ceremonially clean, immediately after a child-birth in the house.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Katha, the Witches are the thorns of the Santal social-fabric. They cause unhappiness among relatives leading not unoften to separation and murders. Questioned about Witch-craft a Santal would say, "Magistrates undoubtedly try cases, but the ideas of Witch-craft do not enter their heads. If we punish Witches, they complain against us and we get the sentence ourselves. The problem is very difficult. And when we explain to the *Hakim* (magistrate), he argues thus, "If the woman over there is really a Witch, let her eat my fingers. Then I shall believe your statement." But the trouble is that the witches do not kill men with such weapons as swords, but by the exercise of a certain hypnotic spell. But, they would argue, it was otherwise in ancient times when the Headman and his assistants used to chastise the witches and drive them out of the Santal villages. But now, they get full indulgence from Magistrates and the Witches are not punished as they deserve".

How do the Witches exercise their spell

The Witches, according to the sayings of the patriarchs, masquerade in the guise of women at day-time. At night-fall, they leave the beds of their husbands and put broom-sticks in their places. Thus they exercise a spell on their husbands and relatives into believing that they are sleeping. Then

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

776
533
539

Mònṛènkoko ruia ḍhelka ḍemba
Ja Gosane, turuikoko naranaka sakaa.

(Translation)

(Men) The Fives are five brothers.
(Women) O, the six goddesses* are six sisters.
(Men) The fives beat on broad *demba* (musical instruments).
(Women) O, the six goddesses blow on horns.

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We think that here we may usefully quote a song reflecting reformist ideas so far as Santal religious practices are concerned. It is not definitely known if a Christian idea or the Sapha Hòṛ philosophy is being given expression to in the following lines, but anyhow we smell something new:

Num rakap kate naṛka sapha kate,
Dhòròm mundil teñ bòlòyena,
Dhòròm mundilrè bòlò kate dhòròm puthi yiñ parhaolet,
Hòrak dhòròmho ruaṛèna.

(Translation)

A man is presumably speaking to himself:
After bath and washing my hair with (the soapy) mud,

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* The six goddesses are named, Dangi, Pungi, Hisi, Dumni, Chita and Kapra. They are all wives of Mònrènko (the Fives).

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

771
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I entered the temple.
There I read the scriptures
And realised that the religion of the Santals
has come back.

533
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We would like to conclude this review with a lesson conveyed by a folk-song :

Sojhe hòrdò Nupàl kucit giya,
Ḍhili sili Nupàl balaṅ taṛam
Etòm koye Nupàl jànum jhànṭi
Janhan lekatèlaṅ bàkuk' kòk'a.

(Translation)

The straight road is narrow, O Nupal!
We must not walk carelessly, O Nupal!
To its right and left are fences of thorns,
O Nupal!
By chance thorns may prick us.

Santal Dances

535

Here we intend to mark in some detail, the various Santal dances, their nature and characteristics. These dances are mostly executed by men and women together, although, as we shall soon see, there are special ones reserved for either of the sexes. The Santals have special seasons and festivals for these dances and these are a part and parcel of the tribal religious life.

B Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

224 was a regular feature in old times but now it is organised more or less for the relaxation of state guests or when a wild animal troubles the people.

Deshua Sendra (Disom Gipitic' Sendra)[1].

[634] The date of this annual hunt is fixed by the Parganas of the hilly areas where the tribal excursion is made in the month of *Chaitra* or *Baisakh* (April—May). The information is sent round by means of 224 202 211 a knotted string called *Girà gaṭh* conveyed by the Santals.

The *modus operandi* of this information may be thus explained. Supposing a string with fifteen knots reaches the village X, the villagers will unloose a knot. When it reaches the village Y, it means that fourteen days remain for the hunt taking place. The messenger carrying the notice is changed there and another takes his place. It is his duty to inform the place of *Gipitic'*, e.g. where the tribe would rest after the hunt.

224 782 [634] [793] The preliminaries regarding which portions of the jungle would be beaten by the people of particular *monzas* (areas) being fixed by the Parganas in consultation with the tribe, the *Dihri* of the area offers pujas to the presiding deity of the hill.

[178] [579] [211] 1 This hunt has been stopped since 1916 when a mêlée took place in Mayurbhanj, so the information sent round by a string full of knots cannot now be legally circulated.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

[Introductory, P. xi]

PREFACE

This book is an attempt to give a systematic account of the manners and customs, laws and government, religious beliefs, origin and ethnological affinities of the Santals of the Santal Parganas. 121

The author from 1931 to 1934 collected most of his data from twenty-two villages of the different Damin areas of the Santal Parganas. Later on in 1944 and 1945 he paid occasional visits to some villages outside Damin also. He is of the opinion that not much appreciable change had taken place within the following years of the Santals of the Santal Parganas. 114 [178]

In this book the author has not devoted a great deal to matters which have already been fully described in authoritative works such as folklore, folk songs, Santal disease, medicine and language. 121

The author gladly takes this opportunity to record his grateful thanks to many colleagues who have helped him with valued suggestions and criticisms. He is particularly indebted to the late Dr. Panchanan Mitra, former Head of the Department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, who helped him by giving valued suggestions and encouragement. To Mr. D. Rangiya and Mr. J.D. Mehra, thanks are due for the revision of the proof sheets. Many others have helped but the following names may be specially mentioned viz: Mr. I.P.S. Monga, Mr. S.C. Tiwari, Mr. A. Sharma, Mr. P.N. Gulati, Mr. K. Guha, Mr. H.L. Seth (Artist) and Mr. J.D. Mavalwala. 128 000

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4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

178
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[634] The Governor understanding the mistake of his predecessors tried to appease the Santal by removing the genuine grievances. He made the Santal territory a separate district called Daminikoh, with four sub-districts, Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal. The charge of these sub-districts were given to a Deputy Commissioner and four assistant Commissioners. The [625] regular police was abolished and the duty of keeping [622] peace and order and of arresting of criminals was vested in the hands of the parganait and the village headman.

In the social sphere also steps were taken to ameliorate the condition of the oppressed Santals. The [426] money lenders were not permitted to extort their debts [804] over and over again by recourse to trickery or otherwise. False weights and measures were corrected and cheating in this department was punished and the Santals could now sell their produce in the market witout fear of being swindled. The abolition of serf- [566] dom and the new relationship between capital and [466] labour were far reaching reforms, and the Santal could earn his living as a free worker on the Railway instead of being a slave of a powerful protector. Again, the [464] beginning of tea plantations about this time gave a fresh impetus to profitable work and a higher economic level was achieved by the Santal, who further decided to migrate to the tea area, and on the expiry of the contract to return with a tidy some of money. Such a diverting of labour caused an easing in the struggle for existence among those who stayed at home and enabled the migrant to earn enough to establish himself securely for life.

Thus out of the rebellion came some lasting good and the Santals in the end benefited from it.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

and night. As a rule they cook their food outside, but always have a fire-place inside. During the cold season they generally cook their food inside, the result being that the house specially at night, is suffocatingly full of smoke and every thing becomes covered with soot. This does not, however, seem to affect the Santals much. In the bed-room they store their rice and all other belongings, and the fowls are kept too in that room at night. It is, of course, not possible to keep such a house clean, even if they tried to do so.

Agriculture :—The Santals before becoming agriculturists were probably in the hunting stage. Still, nothing pleases them so much as to be out for hunting, they even now observe the "Dehiri hunting", which is an annual hunt. During the time of the annual hunt the Dehiri priest performs certain ceremonies to propitiate "Sin Bonga" to avert calamity during hunting. All these suggest that prior to becoming agriculturists the Santals were in the hunting stage. At present the Santals are typical agriculturists. There is no authentic record when the Santal first started tilling the soil. Rev. Bodding in his memoir, "How the Santals live" has mentioned their first attempt at cultivation in the following words :—

"It is just possible that one of their first attempts to get something out of the soil may have been something like what is now called 'kurau', a mode of cultivation that is said to have been used also by Santals in former years, but is not practised by them at the present time, so far as is known. It is, however, still kept up by the Paharias living on the hills of the Santal country. A piece of jungle is cut down high up

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

One of the strips protrudes, which serves as a handle. They hold the net in the water of a shallow stream and walk up stream, after a little distance, they raise it and catch the fish. In the other type, the net is tied in a circular bamboo frame—the Santals call it 'Kabhi-Jal'. They also use bow and arrow in catching fish. The arrow head here is furnished with three heads. Fishing hook is used to catch fish now-a-days. [178]

The locality where the women catch fish is either below or between the rice-fields where there is standing water. In such places the Santals catch fish in the following way. The water is first laved out sufficiently to make it possible to reach the bottom with one's hand. They go into the water and move about to stir up the mud. The fish becomes confused and numb in the slushy water and are easily caught with the hand.

Catching fish by poisoning is not unknown to the Santals. The poison used for this purpose is got from the roots and bark of certain trees[1]. They powder them and throw them into the stagnant water of either pond or into a certain part of a stream, the fish are drugged and after some time they float on the surface and are caught.

Like hunting, the Santals have communal fishing in which people from neighbouring villages take part. The headman of the village, inside the boundary of which they want to catch fish, announces the date by a branch of a tree with leaves. On the appointed day they gather and after propitiating the bongas with fowls, they start for fishing. [622] [824] [782]

1. Rev. Bodding collected the names of the trees which are as follows :- The roots of 'Kita' (Phoenix acaulis Roxb.). The bark of 'Kumbi' (Careya arborea Roxb.). The bark of a tree called 'Sahri Phal'. [824]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

258 through the vertical post at the other end. Then they press together the two logs by placing another solid piece of wood crosswise over the upper log parallel to the wooden cleat which is fitted in the vertical post. With the help of these two, the logs are pressed together. Now-a-days the Santals supply the seeds and [178] [252] [302] [757] [372] fruits to the Teli (oil men) and get oil in return. Besides using this oil for curry preparation they use oil in anointing, lubricating, for medicinal purposes and for lighting lamps.

How the Santals Prepare Pachawe (rice beer) :- The San-
273 tals drink Handi in large quantities. Young boys and girls, old men and women all drink Handi. Their method of preparing (rice beer) handi is as follows :- The first thing is to make a pot, with a large mouth called *tukue*. The *tukue* is filled with dry leaves or straw and set on the fire, they do it outside the house in the open as there is much smoke. This is done in the morning when they are to start brewing. When the *tukue* becomes cool, it is cleaned. Then in the afternoon, they take ordinary rice and roast this a little. The roasting is said to give a certain flavour to the beer. Thereupon the rice is boiled and after that spread out to dry. The quantity of rice used for one [804] brew varies from four to six paos (one pao is quarter of a seer). When the rice is fairly dry it is mixed with some vegetable fermenting stuff called Bakhar.[1] Very often certain vegetable matter is added to the Bakhar to make the beer intoxicating. When the rice and

1. Bakhar is a small round white thing which the Santals buy in the market. It is prepared by mixing hundred kinds of roots of trees and creepers with the powder of rice.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

brew beer by Maran Buru who came to them and told them he was their grand father.

Smoking :- The Santals are inveterate smokers. The indigenous method of smoking is to take some pieces of dried tobacco leaves, wrap them in a sal leaf, and smoke it like a cheroot. But now a days machine made cigarettes have made their appearance. The manner in which tobacco is most commonly used, is by chewing dried tobacco with lime. Hookas (hubble bubble) have also been introduced among them.

Domesticated Animals :- Dog is the most important animal to the Santals. Every Santal keeps at least one dog. The chief object of keeping this animal is for hunting though no special breed of dog is kept. They keep cows for milk and oxen to draw ploughs. They sometimes eat their flesh. Buffaloes they keep for above mentioned purposes. Goats and sheep are kept for trade and for food. Pigs are kept by the Santals in large quantity exclusively for food, and these animals do most of the scavenging. They feed them and also let them off to wallow here and there. In the evening they keep these animals in a small room specially prepared for them within the room where they keep cows and buffaloes, a small door is kept which the owner opens every morning before dawn to let the pigs out. Cats are kept by the Santals exclusively to catch rats. Fowls and pigeons increase and multiply apparently without any care being taken of them. They are also scavengers of the village. The Santals keep them to eat and to sacrifice them to their Bongas.

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

DRESS

291

The little apron or "lengta" which is worn by all Santal men, is made of white cloth, about four feet long and ten inches wide. In putting it they tie one thick-string round the waist and one end of this apron is tied with that string at the back and the portion left hanging is pulled through the legs from the back and up through the string in front, the rest sometimes hangs or is pulled through the legs from the front and tied with the string on the waist. The regular dress of the adult Santals consists of a loin cloth which hangs from the waist to the knee joint. The Santals generally use no head-dress. During marriage or other similar occasions they wear a turban, which is a long narrow white cloth, soaked in turmeric. Now-a-days young men, when they come to attend Hindu festivals like Durga, or Kali puja adorn their head with a yellow coloured turban. At present dhotis and saries are worn by the well-to-do Santals men and women respectively like the Bengalis. Boys till they are five or six years old wear nothing. The Santal adults do not always wear a body cloth, using it in the cold season and very rarely in summer. When they come to the market they wear it over their 'lengta'. They have no warm clothing for the winter, and children of two or three years remain undressed.

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The Santal women use two separate clothes.[1] One they wear and with the other they cover their breasts. The piece which they wear is three feet long and two and a half feet in width. The piece which they use to cover the breasts is three feet long and two feet wide. The Santals when wearing new cloth colour the four

1 [Erratum: this should read "cloths." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

ends with turmeric. Formerly, all these clothes were made on their own loom, but now-a-days the Santals generally buy what they need from the market of the adjoining town.

Spinning and weaving:-The Santals wear cloth prepared on their own loom with their own thread besides purchasing from the market. They raise cotton for their own use. After the cotton is brought in, the first process is ginning. The ginning machine is very simple. It is an upright (drawing) frame work in which two wooden rollers are arranged to run in opposite directions by a sort of gear when the crank attached to one roller is turned. Cotton with seeds are put within the two rollers, and when the rollers are made to revolve, the cotton is separated from the seeds. Cotton is then spread and small bits of cotton are put over a bowstring which is then snapped. This does away with all the lumps and makes the cotton fluffy. It is then made into small rolls preparatory to spinning. Spinning is done by the spinning wheel. Spinning wheels are essentially spindles fitted horizontally into bearings and rotated by means of a cord passing round the threads attached to the two wheels and spindle. The wheels are revolved by hand alone. The spindle consists of a long iron needle, the working end is pointed, the other end is inserted into a fixed horizontal wood. Two wheels are fixed at a distance of about 6 inches to 8 inches apart in wood, a round stone is inserted in it between the two wheels. The two ends of the wood, with which wheels are attached, are placed on two uprights which again are fixed on a base of a "T" shaped wooden frame. The handle is fixed to the wood in which the wheels are fixed.

535 [301] [302] [114] fix flowers in their coiffure and over the ear. The males also tie peacock's feather on their foreheads. I am now describing the dancing of the maidens which I saw personally in front of Katikund bungalow, which is fifteen miles from Dumka. The maidens stand closely in a line in order of height. They then fall away sidewise to form a big semicircle, limbs all moving as if they belong to one creature. They move forward two or three steps and in the same fashion they move backward and at the same time they make a circular [538] movement. The dancers in the ring sing songs all the while to the music of the flute. Three or four men take their stand in the centre of the ring, beating Tum tum and semi-circular drums furiously.

796 535 **Dancing during Baha festivals** :- Their dancing at the time of Baha festivals is different from that described above. They stand in a line the tallest first and the shortest last, then they bend down and each one raises and lowers both hands. In this way they move forward [533] two or three steps and again come back. As above the dancers in the line sing songs, drumming and fluting goes on all the while.

535 **Dancing in which both male and female take part** :- Both maidens and youths decked with flowers and peacock's feathers hold hands so that the breasts of the girl touch the back of the man next to her, going round in a great [533] circle. The dancers sing in tune to the music of drums and flutes played by the musicians in the centre of the circle.

859 178 **Games**:- In old days there was more play and less work for Santal children. But now-a-days they have to go with their parents to the fields and do their share

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

of work, they take cattle to graze in meadows in the morning and come back in the after-noon. But on off-days they still shout and play like children elsewhere in the world. They prepare little bows and arrows, aim at trees and huts and at times they shoot arrows at one another. The Santal boys play a game with a piece of a pot, the shape and size of it is like a rupee. In the open field they draw a big triangle on the ground. In one corner they make a hole of two to two and a half inches in diameter. From a distance of eight to ten feet, he, who throws the piece of pot in the hole, will be king and will climb on to the loser's shoulder who is called "Dom". He in turn again tries to throw it in the hole, and if he be successful in his attempt, he will climb on to the shoulder of the other boy.

The Santal children play a game which is known as Hide and Seek. Here one of the players remains standing in some open place shutting his eyes, while others hide themselves in different secret places. From those places they give a whistling sound, on hearing which the boy who shuts his eyes runs hither and thither to find them out. The one who is first discovered now becomes the seeker.

Santal boys play another game in which two semi-circular pieces of wood and a stick of bamboo or wood of 2½ to 3 ft. are necessary. One of the two semicircular pieces is kept standing by the base just beside a hole in the earth. The other is placed about 4 to 5 ft. apart from the first one in the same way. Then one of the boys sitting behind the second one holds the stick with both hands and strikes the wood in front, and if it

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

582

In Santal marriage there is no restriction of age. The bride may be younger, older or of equal age with the bridegroom.

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There are mainly two types of marriages practised by the Santal—The marriage which is arranged by Raibar (marriage maker), is the regular form of marriage which is more prevalent but now-a-days the other forms of marriages namely those which are arranged by the couple themselves are not very uncommon.

MARRIAGE

Arranged by marriage-maker (Raibar bapla)	(arranged by couple themselves)

1. Sanga Bapla.
2. Kudam Bapla.
3. Kiring-Jawæ.
4. Gardi Jawæ Bapla.
5. Apangir Bapla.
6. Tunki Dipil Bapla.
7. Itut Bapla.
8. Nirbolok Bapla.

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Raibar Bapla: The practice is that the parents on both sides select the bride and bridegroom. Generally it happens that some relatives of the bridegroom, when they go to some village for some business and find a suitable bride, inform the parents of the bridegroom that in such and such a village there is a suitable bride and if the son is given in marriage with her it will be a good match. After that a Raibar (marriage-broker) is appointed by the bridegroom's parents and he negotiates the marriage between them.

584 and cymbals, and embrace each other. Then the bride's party comes back to their village.

After a few days the same ceremony is repeated in the bride's house. The bridegroom's party comes to the bride's house and the furture[1] father-in-law takes the girl and seats her on his thigh and gives her a solid brass necklet and kisses her.

583 [178] **Takachal (Payment of Bride-Price):** Generally the bride's father demands twelve rupees now a days. This bride-price is divided between the following persons :—

Father of the bride gets	Rs. 3/-
Mother of the bride gets	Rs. 5/-
Mother's mother gets	Rs. 2/-
Father's mother gets	Rs. 2/-

The brother of the bride will get from the bridegroom a bull, if the bridegroom's father fails to give the bull then he pays Rs. 2 in exchange. The headman of the bride's village gets from the father of the groom one rupee. From that rupee the headman pays annas eight to the bariatko (those who follow the [178] bridegroom to the bride's house). Previously there was a custom to give rice and Pachawee and not cash.

584 585 The next function is to fix the day for marriage. The Santals give their sons and daughters in marriage generally in the month of Baisakh and Phalgun. It is their custom not to marry their children in the month 584 of birth. Through the Raibar the bridegroom's father 585 sends a string with a number of knots on it. The 211 number of knots indicates the number of days. The father of the bride therefore getting the string understands that the bridegroom's father wants to fix his son's marriage as many days afterwards as the string

1 [Erratum: this should read "future." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

tell him 'Now let us hear the oracle'. The *Jan* then takes his fee which is a rupee and tells them the name of a *bonga* or a witch who is at the bottom of their troubles.

Then they return to their village. If the *Jan* says that a *bonga* is giving the trouble then the patient will promise sacrifice. If the *Jan* declares any woman to be a witch, this woman is harassed in every possible way, fined and driven out of the village, and at times killed.

At present the *Jans* are, according to Santal belief, not like the old righteous ones. The *Jans* of ancient time got their knowledge through dreams at night or through visions in the daytime, not possessed by a divination spirit like *Jans* of the present day. Now-a-days the *Jans* keep informers who find out and tell them all particulars. *Jans* of to-day are very careful in fixing the blame. They generally fix the blame on some *bonga* or other in preference to a witch.

Classification of the supreme, superior and supernatural beings: It is very difficult to attempt a classification of the orders of the supernatural beings which constitute the religious belief of a community. The classification would often imply the existence of a notion of hierarchy of the supernatural beings, one being far superior to the rest. It is curious to observe that this supreme being is never worshipped in the faith that he can never work out any evil. As for the rest the rank may be determined in the order in which worship is offered to them. But here again the difficulty would lie in the fact that a particular occasion would demand predominance being given to particular spirits. Thus the classification would be more or less a division in parallel lines, for it

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

778 the last is a Mowah tree; on its foot a stone representing the deity *Gosain Era* is kept. This is the most important one and is known as Lady of the Grove.

796 241 In the Santal villages there is a succession of festivals throughout the year, nearly all connected with agricultural operations. The chief of these is the *Sohrae* or *Banda parab* or the harvest festival, celebrated in the Bengali month Pous (i.e., at the beginning of the month of January) after the rice crop of the year has been harvested. This festival generally lasts for five days. Previously there was no fixed date, villagers of one locality performing this festival one day, others performing on some other day. But now-a-days the [1178] [211] Deputy Commissioner of the Santal Parganas fixes the date for this festival, and this date is proclaimed by a man with a *sal* branch in his hand in every *hut*. Before this *parab*, Santal women buy large earthen vessels and replace old ones which they bought in the previous year. When the day has been fixed all houses prepare "handia" (rice beer) and people invite their relatives. [793] [784] [834] [624] The night before the festival commences, the *Naike* is religiously-abstinent for before any sacrifice the sacrificer must not have relations with a woman and should sleep on the ground on a mat. At day break the *goddet* goes round and collects sacrificial fowls from every house. In the middle of the forenoon the *Naike* goes near a tank together with some of the [793] [982] village people, the *goddet* taking the fowls with him. The *Naike* bathes and then sacrifices the fowls to the different *bongas* after which the villagers cook the fowls with rice and eat them, and also drink rice beer. After this the villagers go to *Kulimuche* (i.e.,

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796
177

this festival resembles those of all the others but at the end of the offering a ceremony takes place. A wooden pole, about twelve cubits long, is erected and made to [417] turn a half circle perpendicularly and horizontally. The pole is fastened on a loose but strong iron pivot which rests in hole made in two upright pieces of wood about six feet in height from the ground. On the top of this revolving pole is tied a small ornamented umbrella and this is caused to jerk first one way and then the other. The reaction of this pole is followed with shouts and other noisy demonstrations of delight, the people gather handfuls of dust and dirt and forthwith begin to pelt the umbrella. This novel mode of veneration is at the same time accompanied with dances both by males and females. Refreshments and handia (rice beer) are dealt out from sheds erected for the purpose and the whole assembled population regale themselves in the open air with it. The sacrifices in this festival are always eaten at home and not on the spot.

Pata Parab: This festival is performed by the Santals in the month of Bhadra in honour of their *Pata Bonga*. It is a corrupt form of the Hindu *Charak festival*, in which the Hindus offer puja to Lord Siva. During this time Santals do acrobatic acts in honour of their [417] deity. On a vertical pole a revolving cross bar is fixed, [526] on either end of which a man is held by an iron hook fastened to his clothing. The pair then are swung round [178] and round very fast. Now-a-days instead of the iron hook a length of rope is used to hold the men in position. In this festival the same sacrifices are offered [782] as at *Jatra Parab*.

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

624 and scold him and fine him. At the time of *Sohrae*
[796] *parab* all the villagers, young and old, male and female, drink handi (rice beer). Singing, dancing and other entertainments go on without restriction for five days and nights and at these times the boys and girls remain in charge of the Jogmanjhi. At the birth of a
[844] child and at marriages he is in charge of those cere-
[585] monies, and when the village youths attend a night festival he is in charge of them. Formerly he had a
[178] very important position though now gradually he is losing all authority; but the young people still use him as a safe repository of their secrets. The *Jogmanjhi* has an assistant called *Jog-Paramanik* who officiates when he is absent.

Village Beadle—Goddet (Coralt-Risley): Next in rank is the *Goddet*, an orderly or peon of the headman of the village, who calls the villagers together at his command and also collects sacrificial fowl for the village sacrifices. Whenever any foreigner comes in the village and enquires about the headman, the *Goddet* at once
[114] runs and informs him. (One morning I went to a village at Katikund within Dumka Sub-division. I asked the villager where the headman of the village was. The *Goddet* said he was in the agricultural field and at once ran to call him. He then came back with the headman to me). The Santals call the *Goddet Marang, Manjhi* i.e., great chief, and there are many instances of *Goddets* having ousted a *Manjhi* or even a *Parganait*. If a *Paramanik* gets the office of *Manjhi* it is considered proper that the *Goddet* should become *Paramanik*.

41 Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

759 tioned in his introductory remarks the following, "When
278 in January 1890 he came out to the Santals, he was from the very first brought into contact with their medicine. It did not take long to be made aware of the Santals having medical treatment and medicines of their own, and of their belief in this. They might doubt the efficacy of certain medicine; but many were affirmed to be proved, as they called it.

It was not seldom to hear them profess to be able to cure what European doctors consider hopeless. In some cases (not hopeless ones) that came to the writer's notice is also seemed to be a fact that they had applied remedies of an efficacious nature. There is just the possibility that among the many ingredients used by them some few might be found that are not known to western science as medicines".

278 If these medicinal ingredients be scientifically analysed and tested, something of value might be found and thereby the modern medical science may be benefited.

157 Above all the Santals are well known for their simplicity, honesty, straightforwardness, frankness and sincerity in thought and action. It is regrettable that
• [178] these virtues of the Santals are gradually disappearing as a result of unregulated cultural change.

177 Thus from the above it appears that Hinduism has not brought any appreciable change in the Santal culture. Except the introduction of a few Hindu gods and goddesses no other change can be found in the Santal religion. In social sphere there is no effect. In material culture some minor changes have taken

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santāl AW42

The organization which binds groups of villages together is loose by comparison with the village system. The Santals distinguish between the various sections of the country in which their villages are situated, calling them *parganas*. Each *pargana* has a distinctive name, which may be either the name of a village situated within its borders or a general name. Over each of the *parganas* a *parganath* is supposed to have jurisdiction. McAlpin's report, the result of an inquiry instituted by the Bengal Government which led to the Tenancy Amendment Act of 1918, in addition to its main purpose of suggesting measures for the protection of Santal lands, dealt also with the condition of the Santal village system. McAlpin reported that the *pargana* system was far gone in decay, and it is not possible to question his conclusion. Binu Hāsdāk' of Tantidanga, late *parganath* of the Sarenga area, was typical of his class. His mind was well stored with the customary law of the tribe, and from time to time he was called in by nearby villages to help more particularly with disputes arising out of marriage tangles. He was personally popular and had some prestige as the possessor of valuable remedies against sickness, but on his own confession his authority was of a very limited kind. "What can I do", he once said, "unless the people of the village are agreed?" There is the crux of the situation; in the village, public opinion is a wellnigh irresistible force. Binu used, nevertheless, to go happily about his errands, for among other advantages which accrued he received a fee amounting to one rupee four annas when a guilty party was fined.

Kinship ties share with the well-knit village system the governance of the Santal's daily life, regulating his relationships with his fellows. The tribe is divided into clans, and each clan is again divided into sub-clans. The clan descends through the father, and when girls marry they are taken into the clans of their husbands. The clans have a totemistic basis and they are exogamous. Land is conceived of as belonging to the clan. Although individual and family ownership is now the rule, Santals will not countenance the transfer of land from one clan to another. The one exception for which allowance is made has been forced on them by economic necessity; it occurs in the case of a man without sons who brings his daughter's husband into his own house to carry on the cultivation, the son-in-law thereby acquiring rights in the property for descendants. The rights conferred by Hindu personal law on daughters in the property of their fathers or on wives in the property of their

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the tables may be turned on those who lord it over them. In Bodding's collection of the Folk-Tales[1] there are two stories which turn on the fact that the bodies of high-caste strangers house the souls of animals, while the bodies of men of low caste house human and beautiful souls. (The means by which the real person can be discerned is to look at him through the wing feather of a vulture.) In common with other tribes of their group and many primitive peoples in other parts of the world, the Santals refer to themselves as "men" (*hor*). A Santal once said in reply to a direct question as to whether any other race was superior to his: "No, there are no others who are greater than us. You can see that from the fact that even today our womenfolk will not eat rice that has been cooked by Brahmins. Formerly, when our menfolk ate Hindu rice they were made to sleep outside for one night; they could not sleep with their wives. When they brought rice from outside to the house they were made to eat it in the courtyard and clean up the place where they had eaten, and then wash their own eating utensils." Many Santals work as day labourers in the fields of well-to-do caste Hindus and receive payment in grain or sometimes in cooked food. The cooks in the homes of their employers are Brahmins, and so by refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Brahmin they hold themselves aloof from the Hindu social structure. Nevertheless, the complete aloofness of former days has been modified and is maintained only by the women. As one might expect, Santals share with others abhorrence of social customs which do not agree with their own standards of morality, and they exaggerate the iniquities practised by other peoples. The same person said: "When the *Deko* put out their lamps at night they have no sense of what is right and wrong. They respect no one, whether their younger brother's wife, elder brother's wife, their own sister or anyone else. Moreover, they do not respect any of their relations by marriage."

Many of the *Deko* make a living out of the Santal, as the cat finds its sustenance in his home. The analogy is by no means perfect, and its chief value for the Santal is that it ministers to his self-respect. In the Bankura district many of the landlords of the Santals are Sundis, who are themselves classified as an Exterior or Scheduled caste. Their hereditary occupation is the distilling and selling of spirits, and they are usually the lessees of the government liquor and drug shops. They owe their present

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Folk-Tales*, Vol. III, Nos. 74 and 77.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

by their parents. It is no uncommon sight to see a man striding along the road with a carrying pole across his shoulders; in the basket slung from one end he carries some of the family cooking utensils, while the youngest member of the family sits confidently in a basket at the other end. The immediate economic advantage of this annual migration, without which they might be forced to leave their present homes with dire consequences for their tribal stability, is secured at a heavy price. In addition to the toll on their health, tribal sanctions are loosened away from the village. Offenders against the tribal law, runaway brides, women accused of witchcraft, and many others who do not wish to submit to discipline can find a refuge away from their homes, and each year the number of those who elect to stay "east" is growing.

The older generation regard the yearly exodus as the prime cause of moral laxity because it flouts an old taboo. Formerly no Santal was supposed to cross the Damodar river, which forms the northern and eastern boundary of the Bankura district. When at first men were drawn away to work over the river the women were not allowed to accompany them. The reason given for this prohibition was that by crossing the river they would bring misfortune on themselves and their villages. The underlying causes may be connected in part with the fact that the tribal gods are forest gods and could not protect them on the other side of the river, where there are no forests; and partly linked with the fact that the Damodar has an important place in their customs for disposing of the dead.[1] Whatever they be, the old taboo is now ignored.

During the last few days of *Pus* (mid-January) and at each month's end till the Spring festival, parties of men, women and children can be seen returning along the roads in single file, the women always in front. They are bent on reaching their own villages before the festivities which mark the turn of the month. The old people watch for their return and the relieving of their responsibilities. They enjoy greater leisure and may be seen more often squatting on the narrow ledges that surround the houses, sunning themselves. As men and women return from the east they find employment chiefly in felling trees and in carting both wood and leaves to the railway. For many years the traditional attitude of the Santal to the forest has been to make clearings and begin cultivation. The forests of the area are privately owned by the landlords, and they are exploited for their timber.

[1] See Chapter 12, p. 155.

Sr Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

273 It would be a mistake to suggest that the attitude of the Santal towards intoxicants is one of simple approval. There are two standards at work. There is, on the one hand, the almost universal acceptance of the habit, reinforced by its sanction in mythology, the social function that it does fulfil and the fact that it is a form of food. There is also, on the other hand, a recognition somewhat grudgingly given to the undesirable consequences of the habit. It leads to a loss of working days, to quarrels and offences against the moral code. Most informants agree that the drinking habit has increased in recent years. Such a statement must be regarded with the suspicion appropriate to all attempts to glorify the good old days. It does, however, imply the existence of a critical attitude. The earliest records, which indicate conditions a hundred years ago, all mention the drinking habits of the Santal as phenomenal. It is probable that the drinking of spirits in preference to beer has grown during the time when the Santals have been drawn more completely into a money economy, and it is certain that the Congress boycott in 1930 gave more than a temporary impetus to illicit distilling. Nevertheless, there is further evidence of moral judgments being applied to drinking. The habitual drunkard is a figure of fun and regarded with contempt. The drinking of rice beer does not lead to much intoxication except during festivals. A woman who drinks to excess is considered to be loose in other respects as well. People frequently complain that whereas formerly only the old men and women used to drink, now everyone does so. It would be easy, however, to overdo the picture of a Santal conscience in these matters, for they are a pleasure-loving people and drink is associated with their pleasures. The common attitude was well expressed by an old woman who had been asked to sing when she replied: "I cannot sing without beer."

The annual hunt takes place during the hot season. This institution is still vigorous wherever there are Santals living within reach of a forest. Hunting is regarded as the characteristic activity of the male. When the date of a hunt has to be fixed, the responsibility for the arrangements and for making it known through the area rests with the *parganath*. The date may be fixed in different ways; each *pargana* follows its own tradition. In three adjoining localities the following three traditions are observed. In one the hunt is held always on the seventh day of the month of *Baisakh* (April-May). In the second it is held on the day of the full moon in the same month.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

month. The date of the third is arranged while the first hunt is in progress, and it is announced by means of a *girq*. This is a method of reckoning dates or announcing future events. It may be used in connection with a hunt, but it is also used to announce a forthcoming marriage or a burial feast. It consists of a length of string in which a number of knots are tied, each knot representing one day. A number of *girq* are distributed to the surrounding villages during the weekly market, and they are kept by the headmen, who untie one of the knots each evening until one knot remains, when they know that the hunt takes place on the morrow.

Although the ritual meaning of the hunt has been obscured in the minds of the Santals, it is implicit in much that accompanies it. A hunt is the activity of the whole adult male population of the area. Women are not permitted to take part, but certain taboos must be observed by them while the men are away from home, to avert the lurking dangers of the forest. The prohibitions are similar to those enjoined on mourners and widows. No woman may wear flowers in her hair nor use the vermilion paint in the parting of her hair which is a sign of her married status. She should also leave off wearing the iron bangle which is another symbol of her marriage, and she must not bathe. At the present day, although the first two prohibitions are observed, there is some slackness about the others. But the main responsibility for placating the possibly malevolent influences residing in the forest rests with the *dihri*, or hunt priest. This is a special office, and the name is evidently the same as the Khond *dehuri* and the Ho *dihiri*, or priest. Among the Santals the *dihri* is a priest only at the time of the hunt, and he is appointed for the *pargana*. On the morning of the day when the hunt opens he performs the sacrifice of a brown hen on the edge of the forest which will be entered, and the tribal spirits are invoked to protect the men from wild beasts. He is encouraged by the spectators, who remind him that if any of them comes to harm they will hold him responsible. At times a certain amount of mimic hunting takes place in connection with the sacrifice, during which the *dihri* plays the part of the hunted animal.

The hunt lasts through the greater part of the day. The forest is surrounded by parties from different villages and the game gradually driven towards the centre. Within living memory the stock of game in most parts of the area has declined, and some of the hunts are now poorly attended for

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

that reason. Gradual deforestation and the absence of any effective protection for wild animals account for the present scarcity. Leopards, once present in great numbers, are now rare, though black bears are still relatively common. Some of the smaller kinds of Indian deer are found. It is many years since a tiger was killed in the Bankura district. Wild pigs are abundant, and so is the jungle hare, and there are many species of bird whose flesh is prized by the Santal. Every male of the tribe is an expert with the bow and arrow, and he is trained in its use from early childhood. The village parties hold together; they carry their own rations of rice and dried *matkom* cake for the night meal, and they are accompanied by their sleek and well-fed dogs. The men are dressed in loin-cloths, but they wear turbans roughly wrapped round their heads for protection against the heat of the sun. Some of the younger boys carry drums instead of weapons. The drums are used to swell the noise in the forest as the animals are driven closer towards the centre and to signal a kill, but they are also needed for the dancing that will follow. The flesh of the animals is distributed according to a regular code, though the rules are passing from use and now it is usual for the stronger of two parties to take the flesh of a kill when it is in dispute. The man who draws first blood receives the *madol*, consisting of one hind-leg, a part of which he must give to the headman of his village. If the man who first touches the animal belongs to a different village, he receives a shoulder; if it has been slain by yet another person than the one who drew first blood, the slayer receives five ribs, one fore-leg and the liver. The *dihri* receives the neck, and the remainder of the flesh goes to the co-villagers of the man who wounded the animal and not of the man who killed it. When the meat is distributed among the villagers, those who carry drums receive a double portion, and some of the meat is given to the dogs.

By evening several hundred men gather in the place where they are to spend the night. Camp fires are lit near some watercourse, and the moon rises slowly over the graceful palms that fringe the water and the belt of *sarjom* trees beyond. For some it is a night of hard work, for others it is a night of revelry. The elders from all the villages are gathered together for this one night during the year and form the supreme council of the tribe. The disputes which have baffled their several efforts in the course of the year are brought forward. Complaints involving members of more than one village are voiced and range

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

which are longer than the base, contain the finger-holes. Another instrument in the use of which many of the men are proficient is the *bānam*,[1] a one-string fiddle. The bowl is hollowed out from a piece of wood or formed sometimes from half a coconut, and it is usually covered with goat skin, though occasionally there are specimens covered with monkey skin, which is prized for the purpose. The bowl is pressed against the player's armpit and the bow is drawn across the string with the right hand, while the fingers of the left hand depress the string at the required point. The string of the fiddle is in these days generally a metal wire. The whole instrument is about eighteen inches long. It is a difficult instrument from which to produce a melody, and it is therefore used chiefly to accompany men's songs with a somewhat monotonous form of "seconds".

The most conspicuous of the musical instruments of the Santals, both for size and volume of sound, are the drums. The two kinds in common use are played together. They are known as the *tumdak'* and the *ṭamak*.[2] They are beaten at dances by the younger men, who drum and leap about in front of the lines of dancing women and girls. The *tumdak'* is made of burnt clay and is somewhat conical in shape. The narrow end is usually covered with goat skin and the wide end with bullock hide. These end coverings are kept in place by narrow leather strips running the length of the drum, and other strips are wound round the drum. It is suspended by thongs from the shoulders of the youth who is playing it. He beats out the main rhythm with his right hand on the narrow end, and the left hand beats a deeper note on the broad end to punctuate the bars. The *ṭamak* is a kettle-drum made of iron in the shape of a bowl and covered with bullock hide. In addition to being used as an accompaniment for the *tumdak'*, it is also the hunting drum. It is slung from the shoulders of the player and beaten with a pair of sticks. A variant of the *ṭamak* is the *leṛda*,[3] which has a flat bottom. The *ḍhāk*[4] is a large long drum hollowed out of wood. This drum is in popular use at weddings and also at large dancing gatherings. It has to be carried by two men and is slung from a bamboo pole which they carry on their shoulders. It is the reverberations of this drum which can be heard throughout the surrounding countryside.

With the exception of the *sarpa* and the cymbals, women do

[1] See illustration opposite.
[2] See illustration opposite.
[3] See illustration opposite.
[4] See illustration next page.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

one of the original twelve *khûl*. They are not allowed to have spots made on them and they will not be vaccinated, but they may be cicatrized; however, their daughters and sisters are not allowed to be tattooed until after they are married. The unmarried men are not allowed to wear any garment made from jute. They must not plaster their houses with any other than white earth; and they may not draw any pictures on the walls except plantain trees and date palms or figures that look like pictures of temples, drawn with three fingers only. They make their sacrifice at the time of the *Sohrae*; this is performed in the house, and they sacrifice a pig. One year it must be a male uncastrated pig and the next year a female, and if for any reason they cannot get hold of a pig they may sacrifice a black hen. They should sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit in the shelter of a white ant hill,[1] but in these days they bring some earth from the ant hill into the house and sacrifice there."

In a Sarenga schoolboy's essay on the origin of his own clan, he began by relating the creation of mankind and finally continued: "All the Sorens were the soldiers of the Kisku, who were the owners of the village at Campa Gaṛ. The Maṛndi lived at Ciruṇala, and between the two villages there flowed the Sitanala river. They began to quarrel with each other because the people of the two villages had to use the same river for bathing and for drinking water. Now, since the Soren were the soldiers of the Kisku, they are like the Gurkhas of Nepal. Just as the Gurkhas are fierce and do not fear death, so too the Soren." So is virtue inculcated by fostering pride in the clan. One of the sub-clans of the Soren is the Poita Soren. *Poita* is the word—as pronounced by the Santals—for the sacred thread of the Brahmin. They relate that in the very early days the ancestors of the Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the company began to prepare the food and cook it. In imitation of Brahmin cooks they put on sacred threads and served all the people. From that time they became known as Poita Soren. When they sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit they sacrifice to him alone, and the offering has to consist of a male uncastrated pig. The rite is performed at sunrise. They may eat the flesh at any time during that day and the following night, and if they are unable to finish it they must bury it before the following sunrise

[1] For references to the sanctity of white ant hills see *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, by W. Crooke, C.I.E., p. 380. The belief is widespread in India. "From early times the earth from an ant hill has been regarded as specially pure, representing 'the savour of the earth', and it was, and is, used in building altars."

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

they are touching the blue eggs of the *jihu* bird. The Hāsdāk' do not even touch a goose, and they will not take water from a tank in which geese or ducks are swimming at the time. Binu used to say that he had to perform four different sub-clan sacrifices. To two of the spirits pigs were sacrificed in the cowshed at the time of the *Sohrae*, to another spirit they sacrificed a goat in the house at the end of the *Sohrae*, and to the fourth they sacrificed a ram on the open land outside the village at the time of the Spring festival. The Kaṛwar Hāsdāk' tell the story of how long ago their ancestors were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and all the Hāsdāk' were present. They had performed the sacrifices and everyone had been served with rice and meat, but some of the younger folk present felt that they had not been given enough to eat, so they killed a buffalo and served that as well. The family of the one who slew the buffalo, or *kaḍa*, became known as Kaṛwar Hāsdāk'. They sacrifice a pig, a white hen and a brown hen at the time of the *Sohrae*; the rite is performed inside the house at sunset, and they must finish eating the flesh during the night, burying whatever is left over in the dung heap. The Hatibaṛi[1] Hāsdāk' sacrifice either a white hen or a ram to their sub-clan spirit. This should be done out in the open beside a white ant hill, but, like some others, they now bring a piece of earth from the ant hill into their cowshed. Like the Nij Maṛndi, of whom this is also true, they may not be vaccinated, but their womenfolk may be tattooed.

The Jihu Hāsdāk' are not allowed to brand their cattle. There seems little reason to doubt the fact that most of the clans use distinctive marks in branding their cattle. Bodding has affirmed of the *ḍhera dag*, or cross, that although it is used as a mark of ownership of cattle "it is not restricted to any sept or sub-sept".[2] (The word "clan" has been adopted in this book in preference to "sept".) In the Bankura district, however, many of the branding marks are definitely associated with the clans, and the marks correspond to those recorded by Charulal Mukherjea in Mayurbhanj.[3] The marks printed on the opposite page have been noticed in Bankura.

The Guạ or Betel nut Hembrom constitute one of the most numerous of the Hembrom sub-clans. Of them it is said that "a few days after the ancestors had been divided into clans, one of the Hembrom was born at the foot of a betel nut tree. When he

[1] Literally "elephant house", but the name may refer to a locality.
[2] *Santals Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 472.
[3] Charulal Mukherjea, *The Santals*, p. 77.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

In that condition they had for the first time experienced sexual intercourse and, realizing their nakedness, they had clothed themselves. He taught them that they must always offer beer to him when they invoked his name.

The Old Lady of the Sacred Grove, *Jaher Budhi*, is by contrast a shadowy person. Bodding reports[1] that her name is said to be *Ram sąlgi*, but except for the fact that offerings are made to her along with those made to *Maraṅ Buru* at festivals, little is known about her. The same may be said of the "Five and Six", who are thought of as a family of five brothers and one sister. It is only to the "Five" that offerings are made, and hence they are also frequently referred to as the "Five." One sacrifice suffices for them all. The "Five" are greatly feared because they are likely to cause some swift calamity when they are displeased.

The *Mąñjhi than*, the shrine of the spirits of the departed headmen, is the second of the sacred places in which the cult of the tribe is localized. The site is supposed to be fixed in much the same manner as that of the sacred grove. Local legends grow up round these shrines, and they exhibit many variations. Often they are situated somewhere near the centre of the village, to one side of the main street. In some instances the shrine consists of a raised mud platform over which there is a well-kept thatched roof supported on four corner posts and a central upright post about five feet high. In other cases it consists of a cleared space at the foot of a tree, and the roof of thatch is erected only at the times when sacrifices are offered. In some parts each departed headman is commemorated by a small stone which is placed in the shrine at the time of his death ceremonies, but in this area it is not possible to reckon the number of generations since the foundation of a village by the presence or absence of stones. Many of the villages have a history which extends back over more than six generations, and it appears that the stones which may have been placed in the past do not retain their sacredness over so long a period, and they have been removed. At the present time the immediate ancestors and also the original founder, revered as *Mąñjhi haṛam*, are honoured by setting up the clay effigies of elephants or horses in their names. Even the site may be shifted under the influence of new ideas. Thus in the purely Santal village of Jamedia there is a shrine in the village street not far from the headman's house which has been in its present position for about fifteen years. The villagers referred to it as the *Mąñjhi*

[1] Bodding, *Santali Dictionary*, Vol. III, p. 228.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

jaher rather than as the *Mañjhi than*. Until recently the shrine had been in another place beyond the present limits of the dwellings, and the villagers had found such a site very inconvenient. They were encouraged to change the site by the fact that in the street there grew an *arjun* tree, one of the sacred trees of Hinduism, and they felt they should do something to signalize its presence in the village. On a cleared space at the base of the tree there were two miniature wooden seats which were used by the spirits when they came, and there were also a clay horse and an elephant which had been in position there since the establishment of the shrine. The duty of tending these shrines, of sweeping the floor and plastering it with cowdung, falls upon an unmarried girl from the headman's house. The headman officiates as the priest at this shrine, presenting the offerings to his ancestors as the representative not only of the family but also of the living members of the village community. Offerings are made during the *Mokor*, the festival that closes the month of *Pus* in mid-January, and also during the Spring and Harvest festival seasons. Animals are sacrificed, but there is a significant difference in the methods of killing the animals offered in the sacred grove to the tribal spirits and those offered to the spirits of the ancestors. In the case of the former the animal is beheaded, but in the latter the animal is struck by a heavy implement on the back of the head so that the blood is not poured out. It does not seem possible to obtain any explanation of this from a Santal, apart from the all-embracing statement that "it is the custom". There is here another indication of the complexity of Santal religion; it would be difficult to fit all the facts into a scheme that seeks to find the origin of sacrifice in a single or simple cause.

The spirit world is not only the concern of the whole community or of each village but also of each family, a fact that finds embodiment in the cult surrounding the third sacred place of the Santals. This is a sacred enclosure inside each dwelling-house known as the *bhitar*, an Indo-Aryan word that means "within". This is formed by constructing a wall across the breadth of the main dwelling-house and so dividing the interior into two rooms with a mud partition between. The *bhitar* is the smaller of the two. The wall may be carried as high as the average height of a man, but often it is only about four feet high. The opening through which members of the family may pass from one room to the other is left vacant without a door. There are no sacred emblems kept in the *bhitar*,

5i Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

across the axe edge, then held it so that the blood should pour on to the parched rice, after which he flung away the body of the pigeon with his left hand and placed the severed head with the parched rice. The hen was sacrificed in exactly the same way. He then rose to his feet for the sacrifice of the goat. This was of necessity a more elaborate proceeding. A little way off from the shrine, to the south-west, there stood a "killing-post" with a cleft at its upper end. The goat's neck was forced into this cleft, and it was secured with rope. Its owner held the goat firmly, clasping its front legs and securing them by drawing them up and backward over the goat's back, and the priest severed the head with one quick stroke of the axe. Immediately and with great speed he took hold of both the head and the body, so that the blood might drop on to the parched rice. This completed the offerings for the day, and he gathered up the heads of the animals and his other possessions and took them away in a small basket.

This Sarenga shrine affords a good example of the way in which Hinduism can take over the customs and use the beliefs of those who are not, strictly speaking, within the fold, but in spite of the eclecticism here apparent there is a point beyond which the Santals of the village will not go in accommodating themselves to Hindu society. The *Mokor* festival at the end of *Pus* is celebrated by all the lower Hindu castes of the area as well as by the Santals, and at Sarenga it is accompanied by a gathering near this shrine, when many different people, including the Santals, take part in the stick dancing. On the other hand, in 1930 a proposal made by the local Hindus of influence roused great indignation and had to be abandoned. A Santal couple from the village who had previously been baptized were persuaded, as a result of a mission by an agent of the Arya Samaj, to renounce the Christian faith. It was proposed that they should undergo the *suddhi*, or purification ceremony, at the hands of the Arya missionary at Lokhon Manjhi's shrine. The Santals immediately announced that they would not recognize the validity of any such ceremony and that if it took place at their shrine they would cut down the tree and desecrate the shrine with their own hands. Many beliefs have grown up around the place. Binu of Tantidanga used to say that there were certainly times when the animals moved; he himself had twice seen them do so at the time of the *Pus* festival. He used to relate the local legend of how when Europeans had first tried to live at Sarenga they found

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

it impossible to build a house. They were indigo planters, whose compound lay to the south of the shrine. Every time they tried to build the walls would crack, so in the end they offered a libation of their spirits to Lokhon Mañjhi and all was well. In recent times a Bengali Christian has built himself a house between the old indigo compound, now the mission compound, and the shrine without so far having suffered any dire consequences, but Binu would stoutly affirm that he makes offering to Lokhon in secret!

The main intention of the Santal cult of sacrifice is to ensure the stability of the society and the wellbeing of its members. The usual burden of the prayers and invocations, the *bakher*, is to threaten or cajole the spirits so that sickness may be kept away from the village and that the rains may not fail. The example of a prayer that has been quoted[1] throws light on the attitude of the worshipper and the language that he uses. The prayer is the accompaniment of certain material offerings, and a strong hope is expressed that *Maraṅ Buru* will find the gifts adequate; there is, in fact, more than a suggestion that he ought to find them sufficient and do his duty in return. While material benefits are mainly sought,[2] this particular example reveals that Santal worshippers do sometimes look beyond the needs of the moment, for it is a prayer for a blessing of long life and happiness to be bestowed on a newly married couple. The language of the prayers is rhythmical; doublet words with rhyming endings and frequent repetition convey to the ear an effect similar to that given by rhymed verse. Often the prayers are spoken in colloquial Bengali, though the language in this case is Santali. The words themselves are not conceived of as "magical" in the sense that any alteration in their form or the omission of particular words would nullify the efficacy of the formula. There is obviously an element of magic in the ritual employed in sacrificing, but the prayers are uttered as accompaniment to the actions in order to draw the attention of the spirits to the latter. Most often the one who is uttering the prayer uses a loud and threatening tone of voice.

There is no individual approach to the *boingas*. Fellowship with them is maintained through sacrifices that are offered on

[1] See p. 67 above.

[2] Cf. E. O. James, *Comparative Religion*, 1938, p. 278: "In a primitive agricultural community requests for ethical and moral virtues could hardly be expected, since, as Cicero remarks, 'men call Jupiter greatest and best because he makes us not just or temperate or wise, but sound and healthy and rich and wealthy'." The citation is from *De Nat. Deorum*, III, 36, 87.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the *Sakrat*. At this time offerings are made to the ancestors in each house, and the celebration is accompanied by a display of stick dancing, which has replaced the former "sword and shield" dance. At the end of the following month the *Mag Sim*, the hen at the end of the month of *Mag*, is offered. In former times the village officials used to resign at this time and could be either replaced or reappointed, but the only relic of the old practice that has survived is that the headman has to treat the whole village to beer. Contracts with servants are renewed during the festival, and they receive the cloth that is always a part of the contract. In connection with rice cultivation there is the *Erok' Sim*, the hen that is offered at the time of sowing, and *Nàwài*, when the first fruits of the first rice crop are offered in the sacred grove. Before this takes place the new rice must not be eaten. The village priest cuts the first handful of the crop and offers some at the foot of each of the chief trees. A sprig is also tied round the trunk of the trees and remains there. While the prayer is being said, milk is poured on the offering. After the priest has done his part, similar offerings are made in every house to the house spirits and the ancestors, the rice being taken from the crops belonging to the family. In varying degrees the Santals share in some of the festivals and practices of the low-caste cultivators around them. In the early monsoon days, during the period of *Rohini*, which is an auspicious time for sowing rice, they make a mark round their houses with cowdung as a protection against snakes. The snake goddess festival occurs in late August, and although its observance is not widespread among the Santals there are some local celebrations, especially when there is an *ojha* in the village. The *ojhas* all keep this festival, and others go to them at this time to ask for medicines against snakebite. Some Hindu festivals, as we have seen, furnish the occasion for large gatherings of Santals. At Sarenga, in addition to the Lakshmi Puja, a somewhat smaller gathering takes place during the hot weather in connection with the celebration of the Siva Gajon at a local temple. At this time the Charak, or hook-swinging festival, otherwise known as the *Pata*, takes place. The practice has almost died out within the last fifteen years. It had been prohibited by the government, but as long as the old generation, which was accustomed to the practice, remained it continued with gradually diminishing fervour. The Santals gather now to sing and to dance. They also join the throngs of pilgrims, sightseers and traders who collect at the Bogri *mela*, or fair,

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

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Santal, who is not friendly disposed towards puritanism in any shape or form.

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Another type of objection to Christianity arises out of what may be termed the "marginal teaching", largely unintended, of those who propagate the faith. "I shall never become a Christian", said an old man. "What should I do with a pair of shoes?" This remark was greeted with evident amusement on the part of the bystanders. He had been more impressed by the garb of the preachers than by their words. Many of the younger men and women of the Christian community drift away to employment in the towns, and when they return home they are not slow to display their superior material culture. Shoes, fountain-pens and wrist-watches are symbols of prosperity, and it is natural that in the Santal village they should at times be confused with the fruits of Christianity. The Santal who has no desire to change his lot or who sees no possibility of doing so is content with the old way of life.

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Undoubtedly the most deep-rooted objection, however, arises from the fact that the individual Santal knows of no security apart from his clan and tribe, and he sees in Christianity something that threatens to become a disintegrating influence. This awareness has developed its own mythology in beliefs which appear to the Christian missionary to be entirely without rational foundation and which seem to have been deliberately invented by persons maliciously disposed. What, for example, can be made of the commonly repeated assertion that the ritual of Baptism is accomplished by means that revolt the sensibilities of Santals, such as the transfer of spittle from the mouth of the officiating minister to that of the convert? Yet it is likely that the stories have grown without deliberate intent. Santals affirm that mixed marriages are actively encouraged by Christians. This belief, though mistaken, is not without foundation. One of the early converts related that he held back because he was not married. According to his own account he had some difficulty in making the missionary understand his attitude, for if he had married after Baptism the only alternatives before him would have been to marry someone who was related to him or to marry a non-Santal, and quite naturally he could bring himself to do neither. The most usual response to the appeal of the preacher is expressed in the words: "Yes, your religion is good and some day we shall all become Christians: but—we shall wait until all of us can do it together." Less commonly one hears the reply: "If the headman became a Christian, all in this village would do so."

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

CHAPTER 14

THE NEW COMMUNITY

The Santal Christian community is more than an aggregate of individuals who have broken off from the tribe or have been born of parents who did so. It possesses a social life of its own; the individuals and families who compose it have opened their lives to a new influence and with it to a system of ideas that is capable of establishing a pattern of social behaviour distinct from the old. The new pattern will not be different in every respect from the old, which has much of value to contribute and which still exercises a powerful influence in certain directions. By examining the main trends in the present life of one particular community we may not be able to forecast what the pattern will be when Santals in far greater numbers have entered the Church, but we should be able to see the outlines of development in the years immediately ahead.

The great majority of the Santal Christians in the area have retained their status as villagers and cultivators. Their economic interests and activities are the same as those of their non-Christian neighbours. They toil for their daily bread and have to rely on the same aptitudes, skill and intelligent foresight and they earn respect according to the degree in which they display them. They maintain the traditional division of labour between men and women. The men plough the fields and repair their houses; they cut the trees of the forest and cart timber to the railway station. As the long lines of bullock carts enveloped in a cloud of red dust bump over the country roads, one finds here and there in the line a Christian man urging on his pair of bullocks. In bad years when a crowd of men are thronging round the office of the local police station to receive their cultivation loans from the government the Christians take their turn with the rest. The women do the work of the house and take the customary share in the cultivation of the fields and in the food-gathering activities of the village women. The men play their part in the annual hunts and the heads of the household sit with the rest of the villagers in the councils of the village and the tribe.

In spite of the common interests and activities which bind the villagers together irrespective of religious allegiance, the Santal Christian is immediately aware of certain tensions which issue progressively in a breaking away from the old way of life.

TRIBAL HERITAGE

794 The most important cause of tension is the acceptance of a
779 theology—a new myth, as it may be called—that results in a
177 new ordering of religious activities and social obligations. The
178 shadowy figure of the Supreme Being is invested with personality and comes into the centre of consciousness. He is not merely
[152] the Creator to whom little is ascribed except a vague reference as the dispenser of good and bad weather; He is vitally concerned with human conduct. The stories of Genesis are grafted on to conceptions that are already held and affect the latter. The story of the Jews is appreciated as that of a people who suffered through a long history from oppression, and the story of the wanderings appeals to the Santal. It is altogether fitting that the One Saviour of all mankind should be born of a people with whom the Santal feels that he has much in common. The traditional story of the origin of mankind is held to supplement the biblical narrative. In preaching, the Santal constantly refers to Adam and Eve as *Pilcu Haṛam* and *Pilcu Budhi*; *Maraṅ Buru*, on the other hand, is equated with Satan, and the cult of worship that he instituted is regarded as a deception imposed on the Santals. To the Santal who has been led in any degree to appreciate the Christian teaching about God, the identification of *Maraṅ Buru* with Satan seems to be obvious. He led the first human pair into sin and revealed to them the secret of sexual intercourse, for which the polite name among the Santals is always *baṛic' kami*, or evil work. He caused their ancestors to wander through the forests and finally foisted on them the cult of the spirits centring
794 in the worship of himself. It follows that there are certain things
177 which a Christian may not do. They are cut off from any activity
178 that savours of worship of the tribal spirits. They do not contribute in cash or in kind to the offerings associated with the village festivals. This in turn excludes them from the communal rejoicing, the dancing and the feasting which take place during the festivals. At such times they are frequently the only sober persons in the village. It is impossible to live in a village at the time of the great Spring and Harvest festivals without becoming acutely aware of the gulf which divides the Christians from their
794 neighbours, and without realizing that the Christians are them-
177 selves deeply conscious of the gulf. The same is true of the clan
178 sacrifices; but it is interesting to observe that rules of behaviour which are linked with the mythology of the clans still regulate
614 the conduct of the village Christian to a very large extent. A Murmu who has a clan taboo against building a house with four
[752] sloping sides to the roof continues to live in the style of house
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St Colshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

enjoined by custom. Food taboos and those relating to dress and ornament are respected and the rules governing clan exogamy are accepted without question. The reason underlying these facts is probably that even when the myth has been discredited the code of behaviour is charged with emotions that continue to enforce it as long as the village environment has been little affected.

In their attitude to the ancestor cult many of the Christians have evolved a compromise. Some families known to me started their Christian life on the basis of a bargain with the spirits. In one village in particular where there are now eight Christian households in a community of twenty-eight families, at least three of the original families to be converted left one of the brothers outside the Church. The unbaptized members of these families were charged with the responsibility of maintaining the fellowship of the family with their ancestors. As one of those concerned said: "If the offerings had not been continued, then the ancestors might have shown their displeasure at all the children becoming Christian." Others who have become Christians continue to make offerings. In no case have I ever been able to discover evidence that Christians make any animal offerings, but during the festival which takes place at the end of the month of *Pus* many Christians make the cakes that are traditionally associated with the festival and make offerings of them to their immediate forbears. The family, represented by the living and the dead, continues to be a focus of powerful sentiments, and the Christians are evidently aware of a void in the teaching that they have received in regard to it.

The identification of *Maran Buru* with Satan incidentally provides a mythological foundation for propaganda in favour of total abstinence, for it was he who taught the first parents to brew beer. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which such propaganda has had the desired effect among the Christian community. Some of its members are known and respected as total abstainers, a fact that illustrates the introduction of a changed standard of values. On the other hand, the majority of village Christians certainly drink beer. The attitude of the community towards the older people who indulge is tolerant, and the habit is explained largely by the fact that the provision of beer is important in showing hospitality towards visitors. Drunkenness, however, is not condoned and it is certainly no longer a form of communal rejoicing. Drinking to excess, where it occurs, has become a private habit surrounded with secrecy.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

TRIBAL HERITAGE

794 The second main factor in producing tension is that the
177 Christian becomes a member of a community that is different
178 from the tribal community into which he was born and different
158 from any other within his experience. He may know of one or two Santals who have been influenced by the Bengal form of Vaishnavism and have adopted some strange customs in consequence, and he is familiar with the semi-secret society formed by the *ojha* and his disciples, but neither of these provides any analogy with the society of which he now becomes a member.
794 The preaching of the Christian Faith has been pioneered by
797 European missionaries, and up to the present the direction of the
177 affairs of the Christian Church has remained in the hands of
178 missionaries to a greater extent than in many other parts of
152 India. Their apparent superiority tends to make the village Christian belittle his own ideas and institutions. Their superior wealth and beneficence tempt him to rely on their help, and sometimes produce resentment when the help is withheld for a reason which he is quite unable to appreciate, the desire to make him "independent". Furthermore, Santal Christians are linked
794 through the Church with Christians who come from other com-
177 munities. This fusion of diverse elements produces strain at
178 times. There has been no difficulty from the first in taking common meals, and this has safeguarded the witness of the
[264] Sacrament of Holy Communion to the unity of believers in Christ. On the other hand, many Christians shrink from contact with the corpse of a non-Santal Christian. Near the village of Samadi there used to be one household of Christians who were of Bhuiya stock. I was on tour in the area when the
[264] old grandmother died. She was buried in the Christian burial ground, here, as in most villages, a piece of waste-land within the holding of one of the Santal Christians, but none of the local Santal Christians would touch the corpse. The persistence of such ideas varies, one might say, in inverse proportion to the degree of contact which the local community enjoys with other Christians. Samadi is in a far corner of the area and such an incident would not occur nearer to the centre. This can be further illustrated by the fusion that has been
794 gradually taking place in the Christian community through
177 intermarriage. Although the village Christian abhors the thought
178 of intermarriage, a few individuals have ignored the rule of tribal endogamy and have contracted marriages against which there
582 are no Christian sanctions. Those who have done so would not find it possible to continue to live in the village community, and

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

they are usually men and women who are already divorced from village life. A Santal who has been educated to University standard and subsequently obtained government employment has already been almost completely detribalized. He has little contact with his kinsfolk after early childhood, and if he chooses to marry a non-Santal wife he is strong enough to ignore the sentiment of other Santals. He has to suffer the knowledge that the majority of the Santal Christians as well as the non-Christians are extremely critical of his action and no longer regard him as one of themselves. It also happens sometimes that boys and girls who have been away from home in the mission boarding schools either persuade their reluctant guardians to agree to mixed marriages or force the issue on the community by their own action. The opposition aroused by such marriages usually abates with the passage of time.

While it is convenient to regard education as the third of the factors producing tension in the life of the Christian community, it is in some senses the key to all the rest. To some extent it has been responsible for strains felt through the whole range of tribal life, and this will become increasingly evident in the future with the spread of education. The problems created in the life of the Christian community are the more acute because its members have been eager to grasp at the advantages that accrue from education. Boys and girls in Christian families are sent to the local village school without any question. Immediately they are brought in touch with a new world. In accordance with government regulations they begin to learn to read and write Bengali. Attempts that have been made to give to Santali a more prominent place in the curriculum are not popular, for it has no commercial value. After completing the course at the village school the majority of the children pass into the life of boarding schools at Sarenga, where they remain for an average period of four years. The majority of the teachers at these schools now are themselves Santals and products of the same community, but the type of life is far removed from that of the village, and Santal culture is at best an "extra". The main emphasis of the schooling, accepted by teachers, parents and boys alike, is that the latter should be fitted for higher education or industrial training. Two-thirds of the pupils are Santals, but their language is banished from the classrooms except for about two periods in the week. Prayers are conducted in Santali alternately with Bengali. Although they are encouraged to learn and practise

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42
[The Santal Christian Community]

their tribal dances, the activity takes on a self-conscious quality which is quite unable to stand up to the general assumption of the Bengali community that these dances are fit only for the uneducated and "simple" villager. The education of girls follows a somewhat different pattern. For many years the Christians were slow in taking advantage of facilities for girls' education and the numbers in the girls' school were comparatively small. To a former generation girls were destined to the life of village housewives, and the education provided was not only irrelevant but it positively endangered the success of their daughters in marriage. Many of the older generation and some of the younger express a preference for illiterate wives who need less clothes and become proficient in house and field work by living at home. In school the girls live a sheltered life. Although agricultural training is given both to boys and girls in school through the care of gardens and through work on the rice fields belonging to the mission, such activity is regarded as an extra and some parents have voiced the view that it is a form of exploitation! In recent years, however, a change has come over the general attitude towards girls' education owing to the growth of a small number of economically independent unmarried women whose earnings are valuable to their families and also to the rise of a demand for educated wives by a section of the men. The changing attitude was illustrated by the fact that when in 1937, as a result of a change in policy, the girls were housed in cottages constructed as nearly as possible on the lines of a Santal village, there was considerable opposition from the parents. They objected that the girls would have too much housework in addition to their studies.

A new class of Santal Christians has been created which sets the tone for changes in the community. The more intellectual members are lost to village life; they pass to High School or to other training and many of them retain only slender links with their village homes. They follow a wide range of occupations unknown to Santals of the older generation, in government service, as paid mission agents, and in recent years they have begun to enter the ranks of industrial workers in the city. Girls have become nurses and teachers. The local leaders of the Church are largely salaried members of the mission staff who are "compound" centred rather than village minded. Their small but regular wages have made them better off than the great majority of the peasants among whom they work; and one result is that the latter do not invariably follow the lead they are given.

St Culshaw M-8 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42
[The Santal Christian Community]

From time to time the local Church courts have to consider matters of discipline for moral offences. The only kind of "sanction" that is effective in such cases is a social and economic boycott of the offender by other members of the community. This type of boycott is familiar enough in village life, and the leaders in the Church courts do at times seek to impose it. They are frequently discouraged by the fact that the Christian villager declines to obey the resolution of the meeting in which he doubtless feels he should have a greater voice. The comparative impotence of the Christian community to deal with offenders does encourage moral laxity in certain individuals. The further inference that some offences are more common in one section of the community than in another, or among Christians than among non-Christians, does not follow. When village Christians are themselves faced with the necessity of taking disciplinary action they fall back on tribal practice as nearly as possible. On one occasion a Santal Christian man died at his home about seven miles from Sarenga and the local "catechist" came to ask me to conduct the funeral. This request was unusual, for in the normal way he would have conducted the funeral himself. The dead man, however, had left his home fourteen years before and had lived in the "east" with a non-Christian woman, for which reason his name had been struck off the rolls; so far as the local Christian community was concerned, they understood by this that he was to be to them "as a heathen and a publican". Shortly before he died, knowing himself to be seriously ill, he had desired to return to the scenes of his childhood and he had come back to the home of his aged and widowed mother. The dilemma faced by the local Christians when he died was a very real one. No one else would dispose of the body; but if they did so, how was it consistent with the fact that the man had been thrust out of the community? Unwilling to face the alternatives, they wished me to do so. My advice to the catechist was that he was to carry out the wishes of the majority of the members of the church in the place. Later I learnt that they had decided to make the widowed mother pay a fine of five rupees, a considerable sum for her, and in return they agreed to bury the corpse without holding any prayers over the grave. Half the money was paid to those who dug the grave, and the balance was deposited in the "poor fund" of the local church.

The danger of a cleavage between the leadership and the rank and file can be seen also in the attitude of many of the former to their own language and culture. They have benefited materially

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42
[The Santal Christian Community]

794 87 191 177 178

from their aptitude at school in mastering the subject matter of their Bengali education and they are all too conscious of the early handicaps arising from bilingualism. They entertain a very natural ambition to give their children a better chance than they themselves have enjoyed, and so a number of them have banished the use of Santali from their homes. This is done not only to give their children a start in school, but also because they feel that if their children learn Santali first they will speak Bengali with a Santal, and therefore an uncultured, accent, on account of which they themselves have experienced the shafts of derision. In any case it is probable that owing to their education they find the Bengali language more adequate for the expression of many of their own needs. They are therefore predisposed to turn their backs on Santal culture and adopt modes of behaviour that are alien to the Santal village. The moral standards of individualism and those of a society where the individual counts for little have clashed in their lives and have not yet resulted in an equilibrium.

794 781 554

Nevertheless, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the Christian Church is making some contributions of real significance to the whole community through the new educated leadership which is also responsible for elements of real value in the life of the Christian Church itself. Among the leaders, as also among the rank and file, there is much genuine religious experience and sincere piety that issue in unselfish service to the village as a whole and to the Christian Church in particular. Chuneram Hembrom, a pensioner of the mission, wrote: "Now because of my age they have pensioned me on seven rupees a month. However, God and Jesus the Saviour of men have not deserted me. The spirit of my mind is cool (i.e., it is at peace). I believe that if we unite body and mind in prayer and ask anything in the name of Jesus it will be granted to us. All of us pray to Jesus Christ. Although my wife can neither read nor write, she prays with knowledge every evening and we are content. By our deeds and by our words we bring pain to God, but through Jesus we ask for forgiveness."[1] Many members of the second generation of Christians are active in a hundred local situations, serving their fellows. Some are revered by many generations of school children and are themselves proud of those whom they have helped to go farther on the road of learning than they themselves have travelled. In time of famine and sickness they spend themselves on behalf of their fellows and are trusted by all.

794

Corporate life in the Christian community finds expression in

[1] From a manuscript in my possession.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

this occasion they make use of *sarpa*, and the Christmas songs that they sing are set to *Sohrae* tunes, as Christmas falls into the harvest season. During the afternoon of Christmas Day sports are held. These attract large numbers of spectators, and the final item in the sports, an archery contest, has become established as one of the events of the countryside. The interest and enthusiasm of spectators and competitors, who gather year after year to display their skill, is out of all proportion to the value of the prize that is offered. When the sports end the people disperse, the Christians to feast in their own homes.

Good Friday is observed with great solemnity, and the majority of the adults fast until after they have attended church. The services are very well attended, and on the initiative of the people themselves new forms of celebration are frequently being introduced. In most of the local churches the three-hour service has established itself in the customs of the people. On Good Friday in 1946 at the village of Barikul the people decided to follow the service by a silent procession through the village street. They filed behind a "standard bearer" who carried a rude cross fashioned from two *sarjom* saplings. At Easter it is customary for the dawn to be greeted by bands of young men singing in the village and also at the local Christian burial ground. The day is also characterized by large and enthusiastic gatherings of worshippers. Little has been done in this area to "baptize" the magico-religious practices connected with agriculture, and although Harvest Festivals are celebrated by the bringing of thank-offerings to church and the decoration of the church buildings, they have not become times of community rejoicing and remembrance as have the historic occasions associated with the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of the Saviour.

In the customs that surround life's crises one sees the blending of old and new concepts and symbols. Pregnancy taboos are widely observed, and steps have to be taken by Christians to remove the uncleanness resulting from birth. The practice of "churching" women was not introduced to the people at the beginning and it has never been put in the forefront, but the Christians carry out the bathing and naming and the feasting of neighbours. In this they are joined in many cases by non-Christian villagers, though no two Christian occasions are alike in this respect. In some places most of the villagers gather, in other places all the women come, while at other villages only Christians collect. Something depends on the strength and persistence

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

of ties that have been maintained with kinsfolk and something on the general regard for the individuals concerned. The same variety is found in the degree to which precautions against *bhut* and other unseen adversaries are observed, but a new element has been introduced in the prayer offered on the occasion by the local leader of the church. Infant Baptism follows usually during some part of the first year of the child's life. Very young children are withheld from Baptism as a rule, and this may be partly due to a feeling that the ceremony is in some way dangerous to the new-born infant. Among some people it is sought in connection with the time when the child first begins to eat rice; among others it is customary for them to offer their children in Baptism on Christmas Day. When the child is taken to church to be baptized both the parents and the child are dressed in new clothes and relatives and neighbours are invited to a feast in the home of the child.

Many pre-Christian elements remain in the preparations made for marriage. The choice of marriage partners is still largely in the hands of the parents of the bridegroom and the bride. The services of a go-between are engaged and ceremonial visits take place during the course of which the bride price is negotiated and paid. During the early years of the mission the custom of bride price was actively discouraged, but a fuller understanding of its importance has led to a tacit acceptance by the authorities; in the meanwhile it is now often referred to by Christians under the name of "mutual help". The rise of economic standards in the Christian community is reflected in a tendency among parents of Christian girls to demand a bride price higher than the rate current in the non-Christian community. From time to time Christians have met to discuss means by which the bride price may be fixed and excessive demands restricted. On the eve of the religious ceremony which is central in Christian marriage the traditional anointing is observed in the homes of both parties to the marriage and many of the traditional songs are sung. A Christian explained these ceremonies by saying that they are regarded as a way of saying to the bride and bridegroom: "From now you are separate." It cannot be denied that they are an effective way of emphasizing this truth.

The marriage ceremony, which has to be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Christian Marriage Act, is held either in a church building or, where there is no church, in the courtyard of the bride's home. The last occasion on which I was present at a Santal Christian marriage was in February 1945.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

794
177
178
585

TRIBAL HERITAGE

The service took place in the church at Barikul; the month is significant, for Christians observe the same times and seasons as others. The bride, whose home was in the village, had been away to boarding school and was sixteen years old. For her wedding she was dressed in a red *sari*, and her head and face were covered by one end of the garment. The bridegroom was a village schoolmaster whose home was in a village some eight miles distant. He too was dressed in "respectable", i.e. Bengali, fashion, with a silk cloth thrown over his right shoulder. Many non-Christian women and girls crowded into the church with the Christians to watch, though non-Christian men stayed outside and peered through the windows. The service is according to the Order in the Book of Common Prayer, and the bridegroom presents the bride with a ring. The fact that the bride was holding in her left hand an iron *jonti*, or betel nut cracker, led to somewhat complicated shufflings when the ring was being placed in position. The mutual vows involve the repetition of the personal names of the bride by the bridegroom, and *vice versa*, a definite departure from tribal custom. When the Benediction had been pronounced a maternal aunt of the bride tied one end of the latter's *sari* to the end of the bridegroom's silk cloth, and this was followed by the signing of the register, an act that is always regarded with great interest by the non-Christians who observe it. While the register was being signed the men and women in the church sang alternate verses of a marriage song. Before the main party had left the building the rest of the congregation went out and the door was locked. No one else was allowed to leave the building until the bridegroom had promised to pay a fee to the old women whose duty it was to sweep the church, a building of mud walls with a thatched roof that was used also as a day school. The bride, the bridegroom and the officiating minister were garlanded.

At the bride's home after the ceremony we saw some of the mock garlands which the *lumti*, or bridesmaids, had made for the bridegroom and his father. They were of plaited coco-nut fibre decorated with tamarind fruits and pieces of the hard outer shell of the *sinjo* fruit. The groom and bride arrived back at the home still tied together; they were being led by the wife of the local "catechist", who held the bridegroom's right hand in her left, and the small procession was completed by an unmarried girl walking close behind the couple, holding an umbrella over their heads. The knot in their clothing was now untied and they were both carried into the house on the hip of a stalwart married woman to partake of their first meal together, the only time

St Cuthbert M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

when they would sit and eat together. The feast took some time to prepare; the bride's relations—her parents were dead and she was married from the home of a paternal aunt, a blind widow—had provided a goat, but as they were in poor circumstances the Christian villagers had contributed the rice from their homes. While the guests waited for the food there was a good deal of singing, the songs being both traditional and Christian. Here are some examples noted at the time:

Two bows and six arrow shafts I kept in store.
The arrowheads have been sent ahead to *Radha*;[1]
The money also has been sent ahead to *Radha*.[2]

You who should have come yesterday at noon,
Why, sons, did you arrive in the evening?

Three headmen from three villages
Wrangled over the marriage booth;
They did not want to let go the vermilion giving.[3]

The daughter bids farewell and goes;
The house is forlorn, father, the house is forlorn.
The rice in the straw bundle has been pushed out;
Its wooden platform is forlorn, father, its wooden platform is forlorn.[4]

The following song struck a Christian note:

My life (Jesus) and your life,
Two lives (Jesus) are bound together;
Like the *aluk* creeper and the *bandi*[5] creeper,
Like the spider web in the palmyra tree,
Two lives (Jesus) are bound together.[6]

On this occasion I was unable to remain to witness the final farewell and homegoing, but these follow closely the traditional Santal way.

In the death ceremonies there is little trace of pre-Christian modes of thought. This is not surprising in view of the fact that Christian teaching not only gives a new significance to the individual but also has something definite to say about the destiny of the human soul after death. The difference is emphasized for

[1] The name of the bridegroom's village.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 32.
[3] Two forest creepers.
[4] See Appendix B, No. 31.
[5] See Appendix B, No. 33.
[6] See Appendix B, No. 34.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42
[Thd Santal Christian Community]

794
177
178
764

the Santal Christian by the fact that the Christian custom—so far as he is aware—is burial. When a death has occurred the interment follows as soon as possible, but not before the corpse has been anointed with oil and turmeric. For this service the Christians are dependent upon each other; non-Christians keep themselves strictly away from the house of death. The grave is always dug lengthwise from east to west and the head of the corpse is placed towards the west. Whenever possible the body is draped in a new cloth, but in any case the clothes worn at the time of death are also buried. Coffins are a sign of affluence; usually the body is laid on a bed of leaves at the bottom of the grave and covered gently with leaves and sticks before the earth is filled in. Small treasures are laid in the grave, personal possessions of the deceased; and it is not uncommon to bury a New Testament or a Bible with the body. The subsequent mourning and funeral ceremonies of the non-Christian are altogether absent; in their place we find that on the day after the funeral, which is also usually the day after the death has taken place, the Christians gather at the bereaved home, where they sing and pray together and hear the Scriptures read. The dead person is praised and the living are comforted; and no passages are more used at these occasions than the familiar words of the Twenty-third Psalm and the Fourteenth Chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. They share the Christian hope and in expressing it they are giving a new content to the word *ṛaṣka* that is so often on the lips of the Santal, for they speak of *jaejug ṛaṣka*, eternal joy.